Mennonite Historical Bulletin
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No. 1

REPORT

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GENERAL CONFERENCE
OF
MENNONITES IN FRANCE
:: IN RECONSTRUCTION ::
TO BE HELD AT
CLERMONT-EN-ARGONNE, MEUSE
JUNE 13-15, 1919

"But be ye transformed by the
...ew mind,—"
...ans XII:2.

PROGRAM

FRIDAY, JUNE 13.

7.30 p.m. Devotional.
The Message from Home — Bishop S. E. Allgyer
The Purposes of this Conference — J. C. Meyer.

SATURDAY, JUNE 14.

9.00 a.m. Devotional.
Brief Report of Previous Meetings.
Report of Constitutional Committee.
Further Business.

1.00 p.m. Devotional.
Mennonites in Europe — Rev. Pierre Sommer, Belfort, France.
Practical Christianity in France — O. R. [illegible], C. J. [illegible]

SUNDAY, JUNE 15.

9.00 a.m. Devotional.
Our Future Peace Policy — John Zimmerman, J. R. Allgyer.
Opportunities for Permanent Relief and Reconstruction — Harvey Mack, O. B. Gerig.

1.00 p.m. Devotional.
The Relation of the Individual to the Church — Vernon Smucker.
Every Christian a Missionary — Trueman Miller.
Report of Correspondence. — J. B. Cressman.
Unfinished Business.
Election of Officers.

7.00 p.m. Devotional.
Experiences of Past year worth Passing on.
Sermon — S. E. Allgyer.

OPEN DISCUSSION AFTER EACH SUBJECT

[illegible]derators — Payson Miller.
Chorister — R. M. Stemen.
Secretaries — Russell Lantz, Chauncey Kauffman, Ralph Snavely.

RIP YPC

The short but significant life of the Young People's Conference

Annals

Threshing stone research rolling along for Kansan

Glen Ediger wants to leave no threshing stone unturned as he tries to document as many of the farming relics as he can.

"Many people have no idea what a threshing stone is," said Ediger of North Newton, Kan. "It's a cylindrical, heavy stone that was used for threshing wheat in Kansas for a very brief period of time in the 1870s."

Mennonite farmers who emigrated from Russia used threshing stones before coming to North America. Some farmers visited local limestone quarries and placed orders for threshing stones. Oxen or horses pulled the stone wheels with seven ridges—measuring 30 inches long by 24 inches in diameter and weighing as much as 800 pounds—over the harvested wheat stalks to knock loose the ripe kernels.

But within a couple years of the Mennonites' arrival on the Great Plains, mechanical threshing machines were introduced, and the stones were abandoned, some never used. "It is not known how many were ever made," Ediger said, "but historical estimates range from about 100 to 200."

So far he has documented about 70 stones in four states and Manitoba, including two on the campus of Bethel College in North Newton and two more in the school's Kauffman Museum. Bethel uses the threshing stone as a school symbol, and its athletic teams are called the Threshers. Ediger also hopes to make a research trip to Russia later this year.

He is working toward an exhibit of threshing stones at Kauffman Museum as part of Bethel's 125th anniversary celebration in October 2012. To see the stones documented so far or to suggest leads to other stones, see www.threshingstone.com.

Correction:
Bill Detweiler was pastor for 40 years at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church. The congregation was misidentified in "The Minister and the Coach" in the October 2010 issue.

Book on Mennonite buildings translated into Ukrainian

An English-language book originally intended to help North American Mennonites discover their roots in South Russia is now available in Ukrainian. *Building on the Past: Mennonite Architecture, Landscape and Settlements in Russia/Ukraine* by Rudy Friesen was released in October. Friesen is a Winnipeg architect and historian whose parents were born in Ukraine and immigrated to Canada in 1926.

The new book, based on the 2004 English edition, contains 659 pages and more than 1,000 images of historical and existing former Mennonite buildings. Friesen has traveled to the region more than 25 times since 1978 to photograph and document remaining buildings.

"This book will help children to study the history of Mennonite settlements," said Nikolai Schepel, a superintendent of schools. "Books for courses in the history of our native land contain only a small part of this information. Now there is a possibility to fill this gap."

Paul Toews, history professor at Fresno (Calif.) Pacific University, wrote the forward for the Ukrainian translation. "This is the first time that Ukrainians get an account of the Mennonite part of their history, written by a Mennonite and translated into their native language," he said.

Translation and publication was sponsored by the Mennonite Center, a social services organization headquartered in a former Mennonite girls' school in Molochansk, formerly known as Halbstadt. –*Mennonite Weekly Review*

Latin American Mennonites subject of latest book in Global History series

Mission and Migration by Jaime Prieto, the third volume in the Global Mennonite History series, has been released, documenting the story of Anabaptists in Latin America. Prieto, a professor at Latin America Biblical University in San Jose, Costa Rica, traveled to most Latin American and Caribbean countries for his research.

The book starts in 1911 with Mennonite Church mission work in Argentina, where the first church was planted. Starting in the 1920s and for the next several decades, the Mennonite presence dramatically increased, first with the arrival of conservative German-speaking Mennonites from Canada, then by the migration of refugees from the former Soviet Bloc.

The Global Mennonite History series previously released volumes on Africa and Europe. Books on Asia and North America are expected by next year. –*Mennonite World Conference*

TAKE 5 FIVE

Top occupational fields for Mennonites in 1972

Homemaker – 35 percent
Managerial and professional – 23 percent
Farming, forest, fishing – 11 percent
Operators, fabricators, laborers – 8 percent
Technical, sales, administrative support – 7 percent

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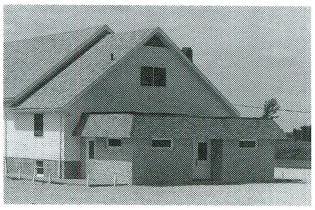

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Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen

The ***Mennonite Historical Bulletin*** is published quarterly by the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee and distributed to the members of Mennonite Church USA Historical Association.

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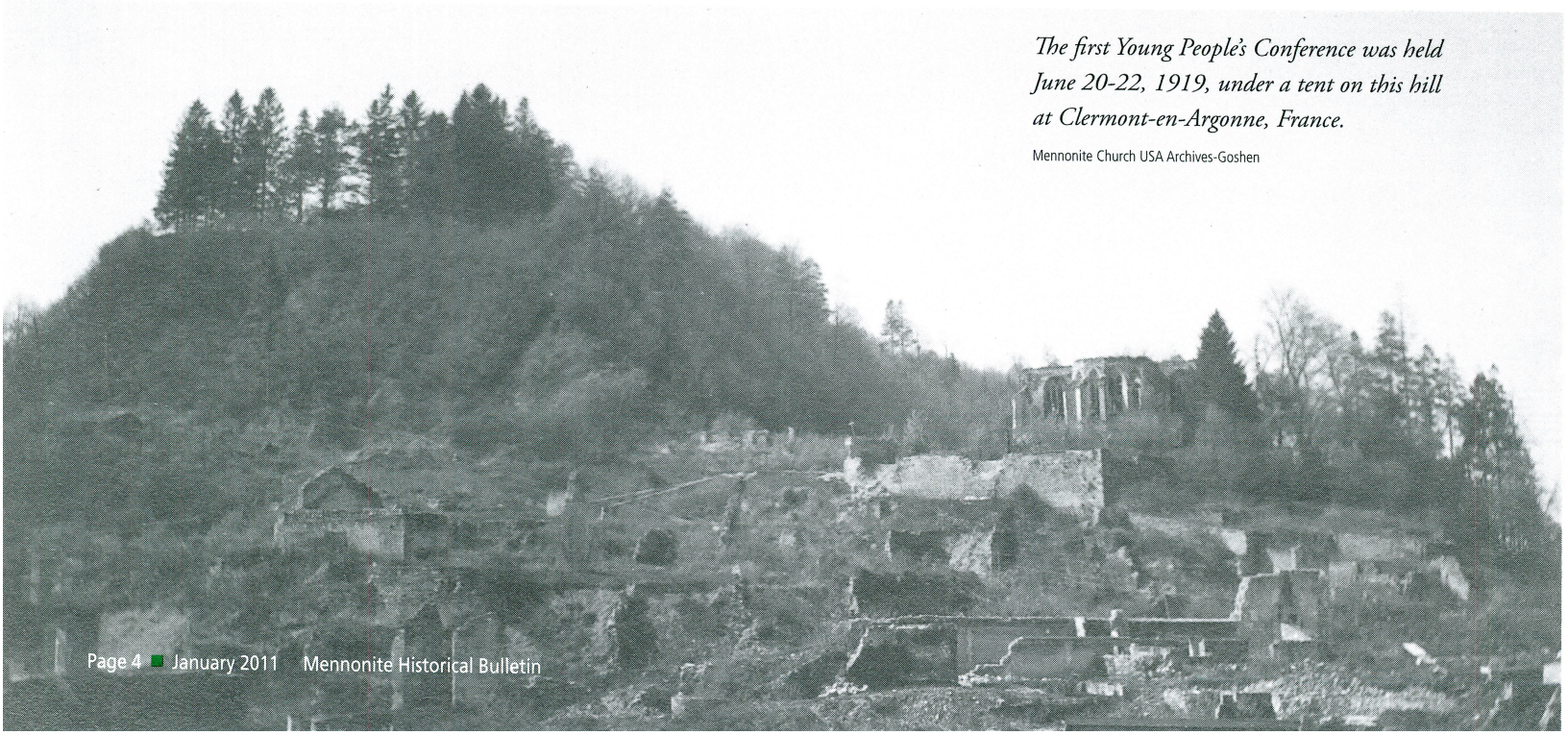
The rise and fall of the Young People's Conference, 1918-1923

Movement was born out of wartime and died amid church dissension

by Anna Showalter

The Young People's Conference (YPC) emerged as a call to the Mennonite Church to reclaim its distinctive theology and apply it concretely to the needs of the 20th century world. As World War I drew to an end in the fall of 1918, a group of Mennonite conscientious objectors urged their church to take an active role in work rebuilding Europe. After spending months in military camps where they refused to do military service, they felt the need to do something constructive, to prove to the world that although they were not willing to serve through the armed forces, they were willing to sacrifice in other ways. In November 1918, as World War I was ending, conscript John J. Fisher wrote from camp to a group of his Goshen (Ind.) College friends, urging the church to get involved in reconstruction and establish a more active peace program that would function not just in times of war. "This is a great opportunity for the Mennonite Church to develop and utilize the talent of its young men and women. … The talent of young men and women should be directed by the church itself, as a whole church," he wrote.[1]

The Mennonite Church had, in fact, established an organization for this purpose nearly a year earlier. The Mennonite Relief Commission for War Sufferers (MRCWS) was founded in December 1917 as a branch of Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, the denomination's mission agency. Not feeling prepared to organize its own work, however, the MRCWS looked to partner with an established program for reconstruction work in Europe. Wary of the patriotism of the Red Cross and YMCA, the MRCWS chose to work with the organization of a sister peace church, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC).[2] Fifty-four Mennonites participated in AFSC relief work in France from 1918 to 1920.[3]



The first Young People's Conference was held June 20-22, 1919, under a tent on this hill at Clermont-en-Argonne, France.

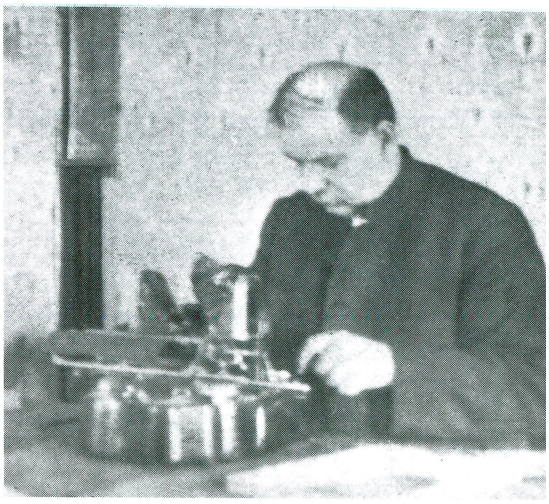
Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen

During the last months of 1918, many of the Mennonite young men who registered to serve with AFSC went through training and waited for their visas at Haverford College, a Quaker school near Philadelphia. There the men shared their frustrations and hopes. What emerged was sharp criticism of the MRCWS and the church leaders for a poor job of leading the church in a strong peace witness during the war. Their concerns, however, quickly revealed more frustrations with the leadership of the church in general. They particularly scrutinized Daniel Kauffman, editor of the church periodical *Gospel Herald,* and Aaron Loucks, MRCWS chair, for not leading the church in a way to utilize the gifts and leadership of lay members in the church. The Haverford men considered Kauffman and Loucks to be members of the same small group of people who were on all denominational committees, controlled all publications and made all decisions.

J.C. Meyer, who would lead the Mennonite AFSC unit, convinced Kauffman to publish an article in *Gospel Herald* expressing some of the concerns of those at Haverford. In February 1919, a few days after Meyer finally left for France, *Gospel Herald* readers read his article on "The Supreme Moment." The Mennonite Church, according to Meyer, was now in the "limelight" of the nation because of her nonresistant principles. But Meyer questioned the church's resolve: "There are many who admit that Christ taught and practiced the doctrine of nonresistance, but at the same time they deny that it is a practical doctrine in our modern social system." He went on to appeal to Anabaptists as the champions of the "modern man," placing individual conscience and democratic governance as their highest teacher. "The realm of conscience is sacred ground upon which the communion with God takes place. … Every man must stand by his own convictions or go down with them," he wrote.[4] The implication was that church leaders were stifling individual conscience, a point that Kauffman certainly caught. Directly beside Meyer's article he published an essay that asked what God expected of Christians. The answer, the article stated, was, "Strict, true and willing obedience, nothing short of it."[5] Already the concepts of submission and individual conscience were pitted against each other, a theme that would return throughout the history of YPC.

By January 1919, most of the young men had arrived in France and begun work. Their main task was building and rebuilding houses at Clermont-en-Argonne, which had been devastated by the Battle of Verdun in 1916. Just as being conscientious objectors in military camps had forced them to wrestle with their pacifist fortitude, working in post-war reconstruction exposed them to the pain of war and the complexities of its aftermath. The men learned not only the perspective of the French whose homes they were building but also of the German prisoners of war with whom they often worked. Once they even worked with a German Mennonite prisoner assigned to their crew.

The men meanwhile continued to press the same questions they had raised in Haverford. During a March 30, 1919, meeting at Neuvilly, 18 workers held a worship service after which they brainstormed about the possibility of holding a conference



Gospel Herald *editor Daniel Kauffman was a leading critic of the budding Young People's Conference movement.* Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen

for all Mennonite workers to discuss their concerns later that summer. The men were disappointed that the church had shown little support for them and that no representative from North America had come to visit them or check on their work, even though AFSC had provided a way for two such people.[6] The men also discussed at great length other events at home that led them to further question their church leaders. For example, they were appalled to that Mennonite Board of Education had named H.F. Reist as the new president of Goshen College, even though he had no college degree.[7]

Another instance of distrust was the additional reconstruction work the MRCWS had just begun with the organization Near East Relief in Syria and Turkey. On January 4, 1919, the MRCWS decided to start a new project, and just three weeks later, the first group of nine Mennonite relief workers, including Loucks, sailed from New York. Some workers in France were upset because it seemed that the Near East Relief work had been organized far too hastily and had no confidence in its leadership. The French workers' concerns were confirmed by letters from friends working with Near East Relief. "The fellows in Turkey

are fed up," wrote E.E. Miller. "We gave [Loucks] every possible chance to show that he is able—he fell down on the job—consequently we are doing our work in spite of him"[8] The workers in France also felt that the new project was an effort to undermine the reform movement that had begun to emerge in Haverford. The new Middle East relief location would not only disperse some of the momentum of the movement but also bring relief workers under closer supervision of the church in the person of MCWRS chair Loucks.

After the meeting at Neuvilly, the workers in France announced their plan for the first Young People's Conference to be held June 20-22, 1919, at Clermont, to bring the workers together for fellowship and worship as well as to discuss their hopes for the Mennonite Church. The planning committee quickly received feedback from home. Kauffman posed two objections: The apostolic church had no "young men's meetings" and no official body was sponsoring the meeting. W.W. Oesch, a Mennonite pastor in Mottville, Mich., was sympathetic to the movement but suggested that the committee at least pay attention to Kauffman's second concern.[9] P.L. Frey, a pastor in Fulton County, Ohio, had three reservations. First, like Kauffman, he thought the organization needed to be in the hands of the church. Second, the "boys" were attempting something they did not have authority to do. "If you organize in Europe and expect your organization to continue after you return to America," Frey wrote, "I am afraid the church would look at such a move with disfavor." Third, he did not like the idea of a movement comprised only of young people.[10] The conference planners heard these concerns and tried to reassure everyone that the event would enrich the life of the church, not undermine it.

The first group of Mennonite Relief Commission for War Sufferers workers bound for the Middle East. MRCWS workers in France thought the Middle East group, led by MRCWS chair Aaron Loucks (back row, center) was an attempt to undermine the Young People's Conference movement.

Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen

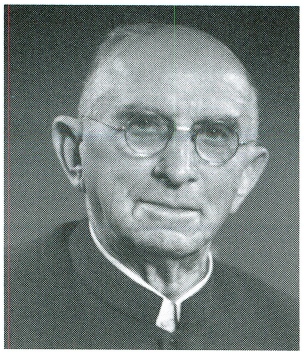
A platform for new perspectives

The conference gave participants a formal platform for what had previously been informal conversation and correspondence. Two representatives from the Mennonite Church in North America were present, S.E. Allgyer, an Ohio bishop and father of one of the workers, and Vernon Smucker, editor of *Christian Monitor,* another Mennonite Church periodical. Meyer opened the conference by outlining its purposes and highlighting the vision for a more relevant church. He anticipated that some would find fault with the topics that they wished to address and urged open and honest discussion from all sides:

> If it is heresy for a young person to express his views, it is no less heretical and infinitely more hypocritical for him to hold the views and never express them. Let us all be honest and come to the light. Darkness, wirepulling, and secrecy never saved a soul and I am persuaded that these methods never will accomplish anything good.[11]

Meyer and other conference leaders demonstrated their deep desire to foster community within the church in which vulnerability, openness and respect could be practiced. Only then, they believed, could the church live into her calling.

After Meyer's opening address, other presenters addressed topics such as "Practical Christianity in France," "Our Future Peace Policy," "Future Opportunities for Permanent Relief and Reconstruction by the Mennonite



S.E. Allgyer

Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen

J. Roy Allgyer

Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen

Harold S. Bender

Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen

Church" and "The Relation of the Individual to the Church." At the broadest level, the workers wished to see the Mennonite Church look outward, using her unique gifts and heritage to advance the kingdom of God and involving the vibrant young life of the church to do so. Specifically, they believed that this vision would focus on peace, service and relief programs. Its leaders would be called out of a congregationally oriented church body based on their training and ability to lead the church toward its goals. They believed that the future mission of the church could be strengthened by cooperation among different groups of Mennonites around the world and by understanding their Anabaptist history. The mission of the church could also be strengthened, the workers said, by greater emphasis on the roles of women in the church.

The conference ended with participants feeling invigorated to carry the vision back home. Before adjourning, they drafted a preliminary constitution that called for more conferences upon their return to North America, and they elected an executive committee and a program committee to carry out the preparations for the next gathering.[12]

Visitors Allgyer and Smucker advised the young men to exercise caution and moderation, but they returned to the United States with a positive review of the conference. Their report in *Gospel Herald* noted, "A deep spiritual atmosphere was evident throughout all the sessions and a seriousness of purpose well worthy of emulation by every one who calls himself a Christian." Allgyer and Smucker praised the young men for their strength of resolve as conscientious objectors during the war and for their commitment to living out their convictions in practical ways through their service in France. "It is the same vision that every true Christian must have," Allgyer and Smucker wrote.[13] They did acknowledge that the movement had its faults, but they urged readers to see past them to the many strengths of the movement:

> The [YPC] may be unwise and impractical in some of their applications and mistaken in some of their ideas. They themselves realize this and are anxious to work hand in hand with those of maturer judgment. What an opportunity for all of us, old and young, to work together for one common cause and one common end, and what a pity if either young or old should be so unsympathetic and uncharitable as to be unable to see the good in the other! Let us not be caught in the snare of distrust and suspicion but let us work together for the glory of God.[14]

Thus, the Young People's Conference movement was born among a group of young American visionaries in France. But from the start, YPC was plagued with controversy and dissent because of its tendency toward liberal theology, its resistance to submit its organizational advancement and individual lifestyles to the regulations of the church and its undeniable association with the already questionable Goshen College, from where most participants came. As the relief workers returned home in 1920, they were faced with the task of convincing skeptics of their sincerity, orthodoxy and loyalty to the Mennonite Church. They had to make it clear that, contrary to rumor, YPC was not a revolutionary movement to take over the church but wanted to strengthen the existing church. Considered by some as "Socialists and Bolshevists" they had to tread carefully.[15] For example, YPC enthusiast J. Roy Allgyer (and son of bishop Allgyer) wrote to his Goshen College friend Harold S. Bender, who had expressed some reservation, that the conference would be open for "all interested in the problems of our young people and church. It is by no means an attempt of the younger element to run away from the old."[16]

An important choice that YPC leaders made was to explicitly present the movement as way of calling young people to dedicate their lives to Christian service. They hoped that this emphasis would win the approval of church leaders. Although YPC, with its early days in post-war Haverford, had its origins among young people, its founders did not originally conceive it as primarily a ministry to young people. In fact some of the early names for the

movement that they considered were "The Mennonite Life Movement" and the "Mennonite Open Forum Movement."[17] But by the time the movement came to North America, its purposed was clearly defined. The report from the 1920 YPC conference established its platform:

> We believe that the young people of the Mennonite Church have a place, a power and possibilities which must be developed. We believe in the function of the Young People's Conference to serve Christ and the church by strengthening the spiritual life of young people by acquainting them with the needs of the world and the tasks of the Church and by calling them to a greater church loyalty, a more consecrated service and more adequate preparation.[18]

Despite ongoing criticism, the first YPC gathering in North America, held in West Liberty, Ohio, August 28-30, 1920, was an overwhelming success. Participants came away with a new consecration of their lives to the church. The program focused on the challenges of young people in the church, helping them find their "life work" and educating them in Mennonite history and theology. YPC leaders planned the conference for the benefit of young people although older observers were welcome and many of the speakers were middle-aged adults. After the conference, the planning committee collected reflections from a number of participants that demonstrated the profound impact the conference had on its young attendees. They spoke of the value of having a conference that focused specifically on them as young people. "It is high time that the church supply this need; and if this need is not supplied, the young people will as many have done in the past leave the church and go to some other church which will supply this need," one participant said. "It helped the young people to have a new interest in the church and see that the church is worth while." Another person was convinced "that we have a place to fill in our church and makes us realize a responsibility." Furthermore, participants felt that doubts and prejudices about the conference were broken down by the genuine and honest dialogue that took place.[19]

Negotiation and compromise

Despite the glowing reports from participants, church leaders' suspicions were not easily overcome. *Gospel Herald* continued to publish articles that implied their disapproval and even attacked YPC directly. Conference leaders continued to receive letters of opposition from key church figures. Accusations were almost always related to questions of theology, lifestyle and method of advancing the movement. Skeptics accused YPC of being unorthodox in doctrine, not submissive to authority and tainted by association with people of questionable repute.

J.L. Stauffer

Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen

Conservatives repeatedly accused YPC of drifting away from the doctrines of the church. Oscar Burkholder, a bishop from Ontario, complained to the YPC executive committee that he "looked for a testimony of truth but failed to find it."[20] By that he meant a statement on doctrines such as atonement, Biblical inspiration and regulation garb. J.L. Stauffer, an instructor at Eastern Mennonite School in Harrisonburg, Va., accused YPC of a drift towards liberalism and away from the "true Gospel of Christ."[21] *Gospel Herald* editor Kauffman, who continually referred to YPC as the "Young Men's Conference" in his editorials, challenged the group to prove itself "in full harmony with the distinctive doctrines, standards, ideals and practices of the Church."[22] Burkholder, Stauffer and Kauffman wanted YPC to issue statements affirming specific positions, especially liberal theology's and higher criticism's challenges to biblical inspiration, the virgin birth and atonement. The absence of formal statements left them to assume that YPC had abandoned the orthodoxy of the church for the freedoms of the world.

In response to these critiques, YPC leaders asked for specific instances where they had espoused false doctrine. Bender, who was elected chair of the YPC executive committee in 1920, asked Stauffer, "Can you, Brother Stauffer, point out to me by direct quotation any doctrinal teaching in the report of these young brethren contrary to the outward doctrinal position or our church as shown in the [Mennonite Church] statements on 'Bible Doctrines?' " Bender even turned the tables by pointing out that Stauffer himself taught premillenialism, a doctrine not endorsed by the

church.[23] Stauffer replied saying that it was not so much what YPC said but what they failed to say. Linking YPC with Goshen College, he went on to complain that not one Goshen graduate had denounced the trends toward liberal social and theological movements. For Stauffer, this was outright proof of unorthodoxy. He also complained that the conference emphasized action over clear doctrine, citing an objectionable quote from an anonymous YPC leader, "Since a union on doctrinal grounds is probably impossible, does it not seem possible to unite for activity?"[24] Anything short of union on doctrinal grounds was heresy from Stauffer's point of view. Conference leaders responded to the question of why a systematic doctrine wasn't a part of their program by saying that was not the purpose of YPC.[25] In fact, they said, "It would have been doing what we are accused of doing, stepping outside our field and trying to take the place of a church conference or other organizations."[26]

A second concern that critics raised was that YPC was too closely associated with Goshen College. In the years leading up to 1923, the school increasingly struggled for its very survival under pressure from conservative constituents to reform its progressive reputation. Those who disapproved of Goshen were loath to trust anyone who associated with the institution. So it did not help YPC's cause that its most outspoken leaders were graduates of Goshen College. Leaders lamented that they were being judged not by the vision of the movement itself but by external factors such as who their friends were and where they went to school. Progressive Jesse Smucker said, "All who are connected with the YPC are on trial and the YPC is justified or condemned not so much because of what it may claim to stand for but because of the leaders of it."[27]

Third, and perhaps most significant, YPC opponents felt that the movement was not in line with the governing structures of the Mennonite Church. In short, YPC had not submitted to church authority. In light of the fact that the original vision for YPC had been formed essentially as a critique of church authority, leaders of the movement struggled to convince the church that it was working with and not against the church. Individuals associated with YPC had been known to accuse church leaders of being "autocratic,"[28] and some in the church heard the cry for democracy as a cry against authority and as further evidence of how YPC had been influenced by modern liberalism. Stauffer in particular took issue with the conference's alignment with principles of liberal democracy and argued that it was not the way of the church. "In the democracy the voice of the people is law and can change the constitution. This can not be done in the church. Accuse the young men of abandoning the peculiarities of the Mennonite Church." he challenged Bender.[29] Those who held these polar opposite views found it nearly impossible to engage in productive conversation with each other.

When YPC program planners tried to include moderate conservative speakers on their program, they often received negative or noncommittal answers. Some moderates seemed interested in being involved in the conferences but were not willing to risk their reputations by doing something contrary to an official ruling.[30] It seemed that until YPC came directly under the control of the denominational leaders it could have no future inside the church.

From fall 1920 through summer 1921, the YPC executive committee vacillated about how to proceed. For the first time, leadership included new members who had not been at the first conference in France and did not share the same experiences as conscientious objectors and relief workers in France. By bringing in men who had not been at Clermont, YPC hoped to demonstrate that the movement was churchwide in its scope, not just the project of those who were in France. It also meant that the committee was not completely united. Although there was broad agreement about the movement's mission and purpose, the new leadership was not of one mind about appropriate methods for promoting the vision of YPC. The question was whether or not it could get official endorsement from the church while still maintaining its ideals. Conference leaders knew that some people would hesitate to have anything to do with YPC until it had gained church approval. But they were also afraid of the compromises that such approval would require.

Bender believed that if YPC was to have a widespread impact on the church, it would need to win the approval of church leaders. He worked hard to ensure that conservative-minded men were represented on the committees and as speakers or moderators on the programs of the conferences. In the summer of 1921, Bender told the executive committee:

> We cannot hope to conduct regularly a church wide conference for young people without the moral support and encouragement of our church leaders, nor would we wish to do so. It is becoming increasingly

manifest that to secure this support the YPC must eventually come under the control and direction of general conference in some way or other. It is my conviction that we must begin to shape our policy wisely and consistently toward that end from this time on.[31]

Not everyone agreed. Payson Miller, Paul Witmer and others were afraid of what would happen if YPC allowed itself to become controlled by the church leaders. "Some, not all but the ruling spirits of the [Mennonite Church] at the present time, feel that they must oppose every thing that does not subscribe 'in toto' to their program," Witmer told Miller. "If [YPC] is not to their liking they will not be a whit more friendly towards it under its official wing than they are as it now stands." Witmer offered the example of what happened when the church took over Goshen College, which had previously been independently owned, and was now trying to exercise greater control over the school. Witmer did not want the same for YPC. "I am in favor of treating with the greatest respect all the advice even in points where our judgment differs from theirs but we should not put them into a position where they must stand sponsor for [YPC] and take criticisms that should be counted to the credit of the people who are active in the work of [YPC]," he said.[32] Witmer believed that if the church leaders got control of YPC, that the movement would fail to accomplish its vision.

In the midst of this period of negotiation, YPC had another successful conference, held in 1922 at Sterling, Ill. The gathering included nearly 50 speakers, several music ensembles and several hundred participants. The program still had many long-time participants but also several new young leaders, many of whom had been hesitant about YPC, such as Oscar Burkholder, Noah Oyer and Orie O. Miller. As in previous conferences, the group addressed topics on the Christian life, missions and Mennonite theology and history. YPC was on its way to winning the support of conservatives.

Church crisis casualty

In 1923, as the YPC planning committee began to prepare for the next conference, increasing tensions within the Mennonite Church finally climaxed in a major crisis at Goshen College and within Mennonite Church congregations, particularly in Indiana and Ohio. This crisis had a decisive affect on YPC. In May 1923, Mennonite Board of Education announced that Goshen would be closed for the 1923-1924 academic year. Financial troubles, exacerbated by lack of support from its constituency due to its progressivism, made it impossible to keep the school open. Further drama unfolded when Indiana-Michigan Conference revoked the credentials of a number of pastors who were not in line with conference standards on dress and life insurance. These events resulted in more than 400 Indiana-Michigan members leaving the Mennonite Church.[33] Similar events took place in the Ohio and Eastern Amish-Mennonite conferences.[34] Most of the original YPC leaders, along with their likeminded friends, were among those who left.[35]

The crisis in the church put the YPC gathering planned for June 1923 in jeopardy. But Bender and his committee pressed on. Perhaps, they thought, a conference could revive a small spark of hope in those who were disillusioned and encourage them to keep faith. Vernon Smucker wrote to Bender to urge him to carry on with the conference. "What a wonderful opportunity to perhaps encourage some who might otherwise be completely disgusted with the church," he said.[36] He was confident that a conference that focused on spiritual renewal and the potential of the church would be well received by those who were discouraged by current troubles.

But if it wished to hold another conference, YPC would have to prove its orthodoxy and loyalty to the church more than ever. "We would need to be very careful as to the nature of the program which we would put on," Smucker advised. "Sane and moderate speakers would need to be used and the thing pushed in a very conservative and reasonable way."[37] By promising such an event, Bender convinced influential conservative Indiana-Michigan Conference bishop Jacob Bixler to host the 1923 conference at Forks Mennonite Church near Middlebury, Ind. Bender then worked hard to come through on his promise to plan a program acceptable to the conservative church leaders. Most significant was that J. D. Charles, dean of Hesston (Kan.) College and an important young conservative leader, agreed to be the keynote speaker. Once again, it was well attended and met with interest by young people and their church leaders.

The 1923 conference was successful in finally gaining the support of key church leaders who for so long had kept their distance from the movement. When Bender has asked his uncle Daniel H. Bender, a Hesston faculty member and a prominent church leader, to attend

the conference, he gave a very noncommittal answer. "I will not say that I will not attend," the elder Bender said. "I can make no promise now, and you would better not count on me, but I am open to conviction."[38] But by the time the conference finally came around, Bender decided to attend and afterward had good things to say about it. Even Daniel Kauffman was in attendance. While he still couldn't bring himself to endorse the movement, he did say the conference was "well arranged and the talks inspiring."[39]

Ironically, the moment of YPC's acceptance by the church also marked the moment of its demise. YPC held no more conferences after 1923. Disillusionment with the church's response to YPC, Goshen College and other progressive-minded individuals had compelled many YPC participants to leave the church. By the 1923 conference only two of the original YPC committee members present at Clermont remained, Payson Miller and Vernon Smucker. Although a few progressive-minded speakers were still on the program, YPC had largely shifted to a more moderate stance. Still, the Mennonite Church was in such disarray in 1923 that even the moderate leaders could not muster the vision to continue with YPC. On June 18, the morning after the last YPC session concluded, Harold Bender and his new wife, Elizabeth Horsch Bender, left for Europe where he would study for a year. Neither he nor or anyone else would take on the task of planning another conference.

Anna Showalter is a 2009 graduate of Goshen (Ind.) College and a graduate student in music at the University of South Florida in Tampa, Fla.

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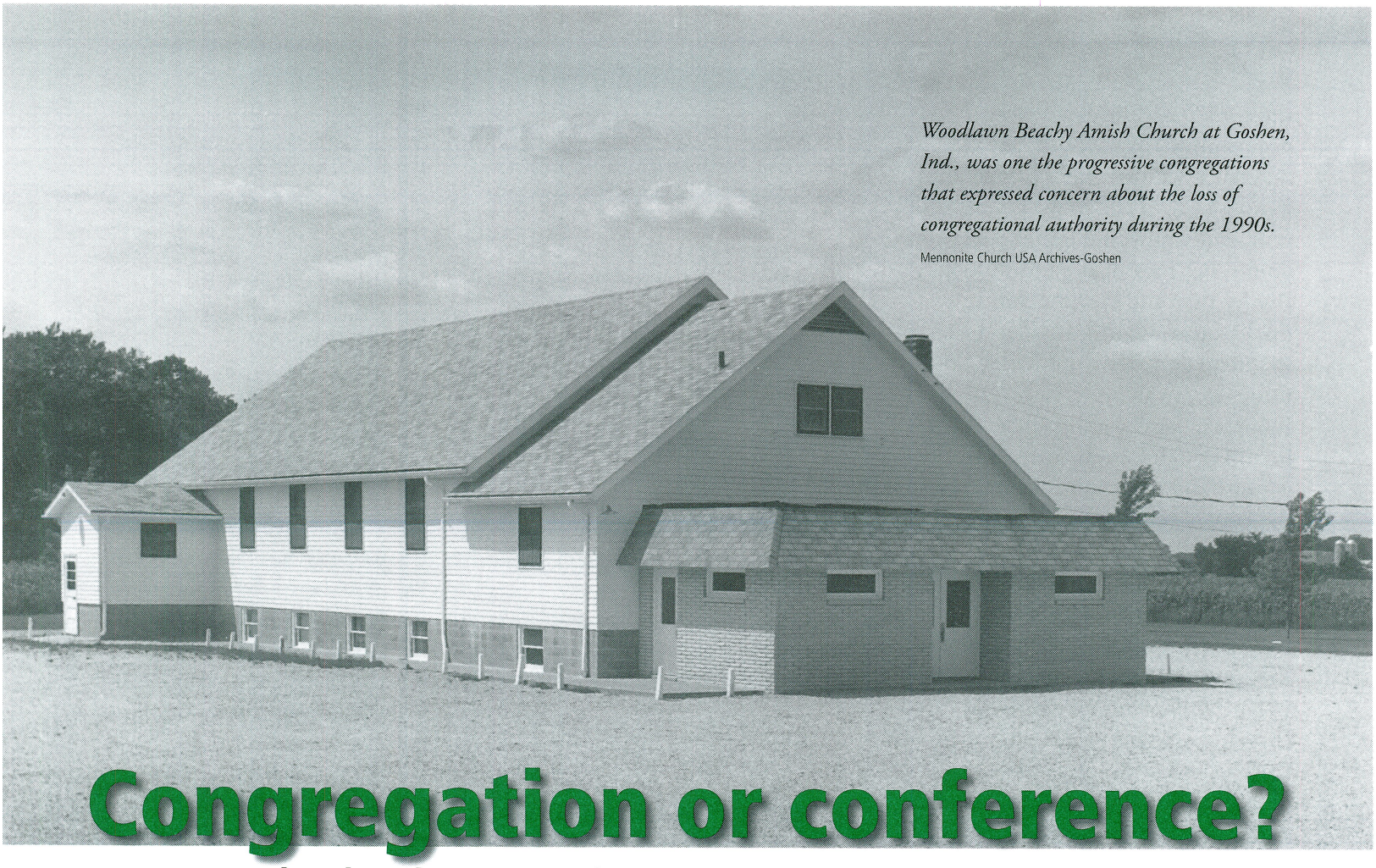


Woodlawn Beachy Amish Church at Goshen, Ind., was one the progressive congregations that expressed concern about the loss of congregational authority during the 1990s.

Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen

Congregation or conference?

The development of Beachy Amish polity and identity

by Cory Anderson

The Beachy Amish Mennonite Church originated when a scattered group of Old Order Amish splinter congregations began to recognize one another and fellowship with each other between 1928 and the 1940s. Moses Beachy of Somerset County, Pa., from which the group derives its name, was influential in the early years, traveling to various states, organizing affiliated congregations and reinstating ordained leaders whose authority had been revoked by local Old Order Amish. While the Beachys discontinued certain Old Order Amish practices, such as prohibitions on motor vehicles and electric power from the grid and eschewing meetinghouses, they remained very congregational like the Old Orders. It was a deliberate choice not to utilize the centralized "conference" approach of similar groups such as the Conservative Mennonite Conference and regional conservative Mennonite conferences.

Yet Beachy congregationalism has become more bureaucratized than the Old Order Amish. Whereas broader, inter-settlement formal organization among the Old Orders is limited to the Steering Committee—an organizational response to government pressure relating to the military draft—the Beachys have developed numerous committees that represent constituency-wide programs. The first formal organization among the Beachys was Amish Mennonite Aid (AMA), begun in 1955 when a group of ministers created a three-man committee to investigate a possible coordinated relief effort in Germany. Two years later, the AMA committee's existence was renewed indefinitely.

With the rise of AMA also came the development of foreign missions, financial assistance, publishing, education and other Beachy organizations, which required regular meetings of ministers to conduct their business. The meetings served a dual function of addressing formal organizational matters but also informally discussing constituency issues. In a 1957 meeting of ministers about relief efforts, the AMA committee developed a list of issues for consideration, concluding that "the committee believes this is all it is authorized to submit, but does understand that other bishops and ministers will probably

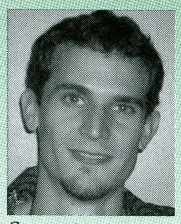
desire to discuss other problems with the assembled group." In addition to casually mentioning that ministers may wish to meet for reasons beyond AMA work, the committee sent with the letter a list of 64 Beachy ministers. By creating and distributing such a list, the committee recognized which ministers, and thus their congregations, were considered to be fellow Beachy.

Such a flourishing bureaucracy was more characteristic of mainline Protestant denominations, including Mennonite, than the Old Order Amish. Yet the Beachys have resisted hierarchical centralization and successfully maintained individual congregational autonomy. The administration of a congregation remained with every local bishop or other leader, which meant that no outside person or committee could make any compulsory decision. What resulted was a considerable variation in practice among the Beachys. Not until the 1990s did they institute an experimental committee that spoke to issues of belief and practice on behalf of the constituency.

The Beachys started annual ministers' meetings in the 1960s, and it became the mechanism by which various committees met and reported and by which ministers could voice their perspectives to a generally representative body of the constituency. The congregation or congregations hosting the meetings each year were responsible for moderating the sessions, selecting sermon topics and assigning speakers. Thus the meetings tended to reflect the extent to which the hosts drew their lines of acculturation in both practice and thought.

The Cedar Grove congregation near Wellesley, Ont., with help from neighboring like-minded Beachy congregations, hosted the 1991 meeting. Cedar Grove had historically been on the fringes of fellowship, maintaining conservative dress and grooming while other congregations relaxed their standards. The ordained men chosen to speak at the meeting were nearly all prominently conservative leaders who echoed the sentiments of the Cedar Grove ministers, expressing concern about behaviors and beliefs of the Beachy laity. "To maintain convictions, we need to have convictions," declared bishop Henry Hershberger from LaGrange County, Ind. Bishop Perry Troyer of Plain City, Ohio, asked, "Should we not as a constituency band together and conclude on some of these principles that we together and unitedly uphold

Historical Committee names student essay contest winners


Sensenig


Showalter

Examinations of two 20th-century frontiers of Mennonite faithfulness were the winning entries in this year's John Horsch Mennonite History Essay Contest, sponsored by the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee.

"Incarnation, Not Intervention: Mennonite Service and Just Peacemaking in Somalia" by Peter Sensenig was judged the best paper in the graduate school/seminary category, while "The Mennonite Young People's Conference Movement, 1919-1923: Beyond the Tragedy of Its Failure to the Legacy of Its Vision" by Anna Showalter took first in the college/university category.

Sensenig, a student at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif., explored the ethical underpinnings of Mennonite responses to the humanitarian disaster in Somalia in the 1990s. Showalter, from Goshen (Ind.) College, focused on the Mennonite Young People's Conference, a short-lived but influential reform movement that challenged the "Old" Mennonite Church and its understandings of peace, service and discipleship.

Cory Anderson from Ohio State University in Columbus and Jeff Friesen from Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, Man., tied for second place in the graduate school/seminary category. Anderson's paper was on "The Beachy Amish Mennonite Bishop Committee and the Conflict Between Congregational Autonomy and Affiliation Criteria." Friesen's wrote about "On Seeing the Beauty of Christ: Exploring the Possibility of Aesthetics in Pilgrim Marpeck's Christology."

In the college/university category, second place went to Nathan Kauffman of Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., for "*In His Steps* in the EMS *Journal:* EMS Student Movement to a Social Gospel of Charles M. Sheldon, 1929-1937," while Goshen student Daniel Foxvog was third with "Working in Solidarity and Witnessing to Transformation: Christian Peacemaker Teams in Hebron, 1995-2010."

No entry was awarded first place in the high school category. Justin Wiebe of Westgate Mennonite Collegiate in Winnipeg, Man., was second with "The Kleine Gemeinde: Reformers in the Church."

Excerpts from Showalter's and Anderson's papers are excerpted in this issue of *Mennonite Historical Bulletin.*

Fourteen students submitted papers for this year's contest. Judges were Jean Kilheffer Hess of Lancaster, Pa., Gerlof Homan of Normal, Ill., and Roger Juhnke of Newton, Kan.

these principles?" He then cited a litany of concerns in the church, such as divorce and remarriage. "Far too many people and preachers don't really know where they stand on these issues," Troyer said. "It is any wonder our people are confused, and the Word of God provides a remedy for confusion."

With his sermon encouraging committee work to unify the fellowship, bishop John Mast of Crossville, Tenn., brought the meeting to its apex. When he noted that Anabaptist leaders of the past had a written testimony of where they stood, what they believed and how they strived towards unity, the Cedar Grove ministers responded and opened the floor for the assembly to cite specific problems they thought needed attention. One by one, ministers called out: sports, the head covering, divorce and remarriage, casual dress, radio, television, music, unsupervised youth activities, hair styles, work, inappropriate Sunday activities and more until 18 issues were recorded (see sidebar). The moderating host committee suggested an investigation committee be created to examine the issues and propose a response. The ministers cast their ballots for committee members, and four of the five elected had been speakers at the meeting.

The committee's first action after the ministers' meeting was to send the 18 issues to three prominent ordained men in the constituency for written feedback about each point. Once the committee had received the responses, it sent letters to all Beachy ministers "to suggest the possibility of drawing up a statement in booklet form of our belief, faith and practice, and our position on Biblical principles and issues facing our churches." Committee members also explicitly stated that "we do not want a conference setting nor take the execitive [sic] board approach. However, the other extreme has left us hanging with some weaknesses." The committee proposed a set of defined lines of practice that would help define membership in Beachy churches.

At the 1992 ministers' meeting, the committee "sense[d] a strong support for the work and at the same time some still express fears of developing a conference and an Executive Board." Nevertheless, the committee continued with its assignment and that fall sent the final draft to all ministers. Titled "A Charge to Keep, I Have" (taken from a John Wesley hymn), the document was accompanied by a short questionnaire asking if the recipients can accept, accept with specified amendments or not accept the statement. It seemed on its way to adoption.

While all ministers seemed agreed in their opposition to a conference/executive board approach in principle, the potential reality generated concerns. Would congregations be required to change current stances to conform to the statement? Would compliance determine a congregation's eligibility for affiliation? Would Beachy leadership, such as the Bishop Committee, be able to step in uninvited if it believes a congregation has violated the statement? The lack of consensus prompted the committee to quietly abandon implementation of the document as a whole. The minority who opposed the implementation of the document—generally those churches with more permissive practices—generated enough resistance by way of phone calls, letters and personal conversations that the committee did not feel it could move ahead as planned.

The committee decided to pursue an alternative to adopting the document, choosing instead to seek support of the 18 issues one at a time. On the recommendation of the Bishop Committee at the 1995 ministers' meeting in Hutchinson, Kan., the committee began formulating positions on radio, TV and divorce and remarriage "to establish a biblical position for present and future reference." Later that year, a draft was distributed with two main points: (1) television and radio are barred because of their "enslaving effects," and (2) it is unacceptable for a divorced person to remarry. At the spring 1996 ministers' meeting in Sarasota, Fla., the committee suggested that if the positions are adopted, congregations

18 original issues

- Divorce and remarriage
- Excommunication and shunning
- Television
- Radio
- Video
- Sisters' veiling (size)
- Instrumental music
- Public bathing
- Casual wear
- Rock, country, secular music
- Courtship standards
- Sports
- Lord's Day activities
- Properly chaperoned youth (motels, materialism, etc.)
- Hair styles (brethren and sisters)
- Mutual respect for committee work
- Effective teaching program for parents
- Scriptural unity

A statement about materialism was to be added to the final list.

not in compliance would be considered ineligible to participate in the annual ministers' meetings. With the floor open for comment, enough concerns were expressed about the divorce and remarriage proposal that the committee opted not to take a vote. The statement on television and radio was better received. A straw vote was called for, and everyone who didn't want to allow radio or TV stood. From the platform, no one could be seen sitting. While the action did not officially adopt the proposal, it still made a statement.

But it was a statement that was troubling to some. In the May 1996 issue of the *Calvary Messenger,* the Beachy Amish periodical, columnist D.L. Miller noted concerns about the loss of congregationalism. "Some brethren had reservations, not about the three issues addressed, but their cause for pause was related to procedure, structure, etc.," he wrote. Still the question remained: How can such matters be appropriately addressed? Perry Troyer wrote to the committee that he sensed "an alarm go off concerning the statement that those who choose not to support a decision made by the body, would then forfeit the privilege to host the Ministers Meetings, share a topic at the meetings or teach at Calvary Bible School [the annual Beachy Amish educational program]."

Again, the committee reached a point of reflection. In a letter to the ministers, committee members said they felt they were "receiving mixed signals as to what is expected and desired." Some people wanted the Beachy ministerial body, under the leadership of the Bishop Committee, to "curb undesirable practices," while others were "uncomfortable with this arrangement." The letter included a questionnaire whether the committee should be terminated or how it should proceed. By the time of the 1997 ministers' meeting, about 110 of 300 questionnaires had been returned, most of them supporting the committee's continuation. But the respondents also favored rotating committee members and commented on the committee's seen seemingly "rather scattered" purpose. The committee surmised that its purpose was to provide "some kind of guidance, addressing needs and concerns facing the church. And of course continue to address the original 18 issues."

In his response, Miller went beyond the immediate questionnaire and drafted a two-page statement of "Church and Inter-Church Structure." He wrote that the statement had support from leaders of at least five congregations that were on the permissive end of practice in the constituency. "[T]his autonomous structure must be balanced with a sensitivity toward and respect for each autonomous body within the general constituency," Miller summarized. "We cannot be arrogantly independent." He made no concrete proposals but rather encouraged attention to trends with "a willingness to take necessary steps to guard ourselves," emphasis on teaching programs, perhaps even a method by which lay members could bring concerns to the larger body.

Daniel Nisly, a Kansas minister like Miller, felt the committee should discontinue its work altogether. "If we move toward the idea that [a congregation] doesn't come up to our expectations, then are they not only not one of us but anyone who preaches for them will also be cut off?" His comments exposed one of the core fears among the more permissive congregations, that if a constituency-wide statement of practice would be adopted, they may have to choose between revising their practice or being disfellowshipped. The committee in December wrote another letter to the constituency, this time addressing the perennial concerns about conference-style approaches. Beginning by commending the ministers for their show of support of the statement against television and radio, the letter concluded, "It does not seem that congregational autonomy is violated by some inter-congregational appeals when there is significant concern about the influence of some practices. Congregational commitment to respect basic inter-congregational issues would seem appropriate for the sake of keeping up inter-congregational fellowship and ministries."

At the 1999 minister's meeting, held at Salisbury, Pa., the gathered ministers rose to their feet in an official and overwhelming show of support for the statement against radio and television. Eight years after the conception of the committee, the committee succeeded in the adoption of two of the 18 points of concern raised at the Ontario meeting. Despite this achievement, however, the remarriage statement, shelved at the 1996 ministers' meeting, remained at the bottom of the pile, as did the 15 issues that remained untouched.

Cory Anderson is a graduate student in rural sociology at Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.

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The back page

Faith and taxes

If taxes are one of life's certainties, as the old axiom tells us, then fierce arguments about taxes are just as certain. That was in full display late last year as the sweeping tax cuts implemented by President George W. Bush were about to expire. The decision-makers in Washington agreed on extending the cuts for people who make less than $250,000 a year but vehemently disagreed about the level of taxation for those make more than that.

The role and responsibility of the wealthiest people in the civic tax structure is an age-old issue. But it's not limited to the spheres of business and economics. It's also an ethical and spiritual matter. One churchman who studied "unequal taxation" concluded that it is a "sin often over-looked."

"Those who could best afford to pay [taxes] are the very ones who most frequently evade their duty," he wrote. "It is no more than just that the rich should pay proportionately."

He didn't explain what exactly a proportionate amount might be, but it's obvious that, for him, taxes and faith must be linked. At the heart of his outcry was his belief that lower taxes for the wealthy is symptomatic of the worldly and corrupting pursuit of mammon. People will go to any length, no matter its legality or morality, to acquire as much money and other worldly possessions as possible.

Meanwhile, writing of his experience in urban ministry in Chicago and Canton, Ohio, he noted that the poor pay three to four times more for rent than do the rich. They pay twice as much to heat their homes and interest rates of 120 percent at pawn shops when they need to borrow money. "Ever since Cain had to answer for a murdered Abel, the stronger must answer for the weaker," the writer said.

He didn't disparage money itself and admitted that much good is possible because of it. But he also declared, "Money is opportunity, and opportunity brings responsibility."

These are not the words of a Democratic congressional representative or a socialist-leaning broadcaster. They weren't uttered by a hippie-like radical or a community activist. Rather, they

came from the pen of the first president of Mennonite Board of Missions, M.S. Steiner, in his 1899 book *Pitfalls and Safeguards.*

The more things change …

–Rich Preheim

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Historical
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Food for thought:
Revisiting the creation of MCC

Annals

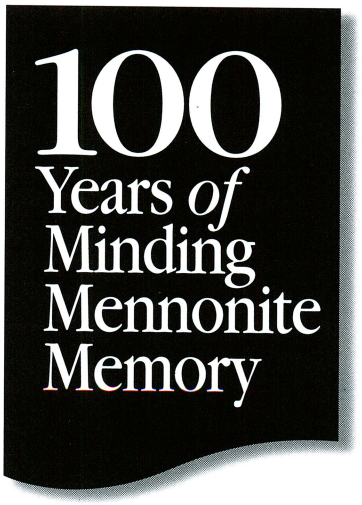
Historical Committee to observe centennial at convention

Happy birthday to us! The Mennonite Church USA Historical is 100 years old and will celebrate by—what else?—revisiting history at this summer's denominational convention in Pittsburgh.

Both the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church started their first historical initiatives in 1911. At its biennial conference that year, the Mennonite Church appointed a committee to write "an authentic" history of the church. Meanwhile, members of the General Conference Mennonite Church formed the Mennonite Historical Association to "collect, preserve and make available for research materials of historical and cultural value for Mennonites."

Those two organizations refashioned themselves a number of times in the following years until 2002, when the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee was born to serve the new denomination formed by the merger of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church.

At the Mennonite Church USA convention in Pittsburgh July 4-9, the Historical Committee will unveil an exhibit examining U.S. Mennonites' history of race relations, both achievements and failures. Placards placed throughout the convention center will highlight people, places, events and developments about people of color and a historically white-dominated church. Subjects include the first African-American minister, the Ku Klux Klan, Hispanic membership growth and Native American mission efforts.



Several seminars will also address issues related to people of color. Historical Committee members Felipe Hinojosa and Regina Shands Stoltzfus plus Tobin Miller Shearer will lead a panel discussion on "African-American and Latina/o Mennonites: Marginal No More." Hinojosa is a history professor at Texas A&M University, Stoltzfus is a peace and justice professor at Goshen College, and Shearer is a history professor and director of the African-American Studies program at the University of Montana.

In addition, Hinojosa will give a seminar on "Latina/o Mennonites: Faith, Identity and Activism," while Stoltzfus will present "African-American Women in the 20th Century Mennonite Experience."

Other seminars will be "The Hutterites and Communal Anabaptism in 2011" by Rod Janzen, Historical Committee member and history professor at Fresno Pacific University, and "History How-To's" by Historical Committee director Rich Preheim.

Also planned for the Pittsburgh convention is the introduction of a redesigned and revamped *Mennonite Historical Bulletin*. The first issue will feature 100 significant Mennonite historical developments of the past 100 years.

TAKE 5 FIVE

Largest Mennonite Church USA (Mennonite Church & General Conference Mennonite Church) congregations 50 years ago

1. First Mennonite Church, Berne, Ind. – 1,318 members
2. Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson, Neb. – 1,081 members
3. First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan. – 886 members
4. Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, Kan. – 847 members
5. Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, Kan. – 836 members

The six largest U.S. congregations were members of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

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On the cover: Mennonite Central Committee kitchen for feeding Russian children of famine.
Mennonite Church USA Archives-North Newton

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Microfilms of Volumes I-L of the ***Mennonite Historical Bulletin*** are available from ProQuest Information and Learning, 300 N. Zeeb Rd., P.O. Box 1346, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346.

Two men take the place of horses to pull a plow in Russia in the early 1920s. The famine in after World War I, which led to the creation of Mennonite Central Committee, resulted in the loss of much livestock.

Mennonite Church USA Archives-North Newton

The polygenetic origins of feeding the hungry

Another inter-Mennonite organization paved the way for Mennonite Central Committee

by James C. Juhnke

According to popular accounts, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) was born at a July 27-28, 1920, meeting of a variety of church groups at Prairie Street Mennonite Church in Elkhart, Ind. It was a momentous gathering. The organization that emerged from it became the largest Mennonite relief agency in the world and the major means for Russian Mennonites and Old Mennonites[1] in North America to overcome cultural barriers between their two groups.

The only surviving report of that meeting comes from Orie O. Miller, as told to his biographer, Paul Erb. The book describes how those in attendance at Prairie Street were trying to create a structure to respond to the needs of their fellow Mennonites in Russia. Struggling, they turned to Miller for help. "You have had experience," they cried. "But how can I do without a committee to send me," replied Miller, who had previously served with the Mennonite Relief Commission for War Sufferers (MRCWS) in the Middle East. "There are five committees represented here. It's hard enough to work under one, let alone five." The represented bodies subsequently together took the historic step of creating a single, central body for their relief efforts.

This story, told from the Old Mennonite point of view, has become the standard narrative about the origins of MCC. But from the Russian Mennonite perspective, unified relief work was their initiative, organized seven months earlier in Hillsboro, Kan. There were not multiple Mennonite groups present at Prairie Street, but two: the Old Mennonites' MRCWS and the Russian Mennonites' Emergency Relief Committee of the Mennonites of North America (ERCMNA), founded expressly to assist their *Glaubensgenossen*, or "comrades in faith," in Russia. The question at Prairie Street was whether the Old Mennonites would join the ERCMNA.

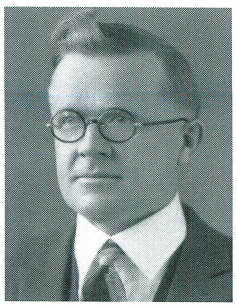
The urgency of the Russian Mennonite work should be seen in the context of the immigrant church members' long heritage of providing mutual aid to their ethnic relatives who remained in Russia. Initially, the North Americans individually sent help to family members who wanted to emigrate or had fallen on hard times. But soon there were opportunities for corporately organized assistance. In 1883-84, some Russian Mennonites who had settled in Central Asia fell victim to poverty, thievery and bad leadership. Leaders in Kansas and Nebraska organized separate response committees, which then combined to form the American Mennonite Aid Committee. It enabled nearly 200 people to come to North America.[2]

In following years, the editors of German-language Russian Mennonite newspapers in America continued to publicize needs in Russia and organize mutual aid efforts. With the coming of the Great War in Europe in 1914, editors of *Der Herold* in Newton, Kan., and *Vorwärts* in Hillsboro, Kan., collected money for the German Red Cross and forwarded the funds to the German ambassador in Washington, D.C. By December 1914, more than $1,000 had been contributed, *Vorwärts* announced.[3] Those gifts, of course, came to an end when the United States declared war on Germany in April 1917.

Particularly active was Martin B. Fast, member of the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren and editor of *Die Mennonitische Rundschau* from 1903 to 1910. Born in Tiegerweide in South Russia, he had immigrated to Nebraska in 1877 and eventually settled in Reedley, Calif. Fast sent his first gifts to his Russian *Glaubensgenossen* in Russia in 1906. He personally visited Russia two years later and made arrangements to distribute the aid to truly needy people. Fast claimed that from 1906 onward he forwarded $110,000 to the poor and to mission stations.[4] In 1919 he made a remarkable five-month trip to Russia, by ship from Seattle to Vladivostok and by Trans-Siberian Railway to Omsk, to deliver 51 chests of clothing and a significant amount of money to needy Mennonites east of the Ural Mountains. He then published a well-read 124-page account of his journey.[5] Fast urged that all Mennonites in North America should cooperate in a common effort of mutual aid to the suffering Mennonites in Russia.

A giant step toward that goal came on January 4, 1920, when representatives of the General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Brethren and Krimmer Mennonite Brethren met in Hillsboro and formed the inter-Mennonite ERCMNA. Peter C. Hiebert of the Mennonite Brethren was selected as chair, D.J. Regier of the General Conference Mennonite Church was chosen treasurer, and the KMB's Fast and D.E. Harder were named recording secretary and general secretary respectively. The new organization determined to invite the Old Mennonites to join in a wider combined effort.

The Old Mennonites had started their own organization, MRCWS, in December 1917 as war was raging in Europe.[6] They did not begin their own relief work but in early 1918 moved to work with the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) for reconstruction work in France and with the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief (later Near East Relief) with headquarters in Constantinople. By the end of 1919, MRCWS had sent about 60



Officers of the Emergency Committee of the Mennonites of North America (left to right): treasurer D.J. Regier of the General Conference Mennonite Church, recording secretary Martin B. Fast of the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren and chair Peter C. Hiebert of the Mennonite Brethren.

Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen

Mennonites, mostly but not exclusively Old Mennonite, to work under AFSC. The first MRCWS workers to go out under Near East Relief sailed on January 25, 1919. One member of the group, Orie Miller, proved to be an exceptionally capable administrator. He became convinced that Mennonites should establish their own independent relief work agency and that it should focus on material aid to the suffering Mennonites in the Ukraine. Miller returned home by way of Europe in the spring of 1920. In Basel, he met the *Russland Mennonitische Studienkommission,* the four-man delegation from Russia sent to Western Europe and North America to raise awareness of conditions and to explore resettlement possibilities. From these men Miller heard of the awful conditions in Russia, the desire of the Mennonites in the Ukraine to emigrate and their appeal for food and material aid. He eventually formed a plan to return to Europe and open the way for aid to Mennonites in Russia. And he hoped to do it under an independent agency representing both Old Mennonites and Russian Mennonites in America.

But the Old Mennonites were beset by theological and generational divisions. Just one week before the Prairie Street meeting, Daniel Kauffman, powerful conservative and editor of the *Gospel Herald,* the Old Mennonite magazine, published a front-page editorial against unity that did not include "full obedience in the faith and hope of the Gospel." He wrote:

> "The essential element of Christian unity is a oneness in the faith and hope of the Gospel. This kind of unity will not admit of ignoring one jot or tittle of God's Word. It implies faith in our Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, faith in the entire Bible as the word of God, a faith which includes full obedience to all the commandments of Christ. It means a coming together in oneness on the solid Gospel platform and a prayerful effort to 'teach all nations … to observe all things whatsoever' Christ commanded us. … [Let us] earnestly oppose, as soul-destroying, any coming together on any other platform."[7]

For Kauffman and other conservative Old Mennonite leaders, "all things" included wearing the regulation plain coat and obeying the other "ordinances and restrictions" as found in *Bible Doctrine,* Kauffman's influential book that set forth the authoritative teachings that church leaders promoted among their people. In the context of the upcoming meeting at Prairie Street, Kauffman's editorial constituted a stark warning.

Meanwhile, Kauffman and other Old Mennonite leaders were being condemned as incompetent by many of the young people serving with MRCWS and AFSC in France. Angry and restless, they appointed three of their own to investigate the possibilities of relief work in Russia. The Old Mennonites needed to take action to stay ahead of the energetic, youthful activists in Europe.

At the July 27-28, 1920, Prairie Street meeting, then, the time was ripe for cooperative action. On one side were the Russian Mennonites and their history of aiding their *Glaubensgenossen,* an urgent concern to help their ethnic relatives and the conviction that all Mennonites in North America should cooperate in the effort. They had had one successful relief expedition, by way of Vladivostok, but now



Russian Mennonite representatives at the July 27-28, 1920, meeting in Elkhart, Ind., that created Mennonite Central Committee (left to right): W.J. Ewert and H.H. Regier, both from the General Conference Mennonite Church, and A.A. Friesen, a member of the Russland Mennonitische Studienkommission. *Also present was Peter C. Hiebert of the Mennonite Brethren and chair of the Emergency Committee of the Mennonites of North America.* Mennonite Church USA Archives-North Newton

'Unsung hero' of MCC's first relief efforts

by James C. Juhnke

American Relief Administration workers in Russia, circa 1921.

Mennonite Church USA Archives-North Newton

Today's popular accounts of the beginning of Mennonite Central Committee tell the story from the Old Mennonite point of view, focusing particularly on Orie Miller and Clayton Kratz, their entry into the Ukraine, and Kratz's disappearance and death.[1] The brief "History of MCC" on the agency's website says:

> "Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) was formed when representatives of various Mennonite conferences met July 27-28, 1920, in Elkhart, Ind., and pledged to aid hungry people, including Mennonites, in Russia and Ukraine. The first three MCC workers, Orie O. Miller, Clayton Kratz and Arthur Slagel, delivered aid in Russia, Ukraine and Turkey. Kratz disappeared and was believed killed. Miller and Slagel returned."[2]

This account refers to a momentous and dramatic time. But it is not accurate to say that Miller and Kratz delivered aid to the Ukraine (which was a province in Russia, not a separate country). They made a preliminary investigation, hoping to make arrangements. But they did not actually deliver food or material goods. The Red army overwhelmed the counter-revolutionary White forces and refused to allow the Mennonites or any other relief agencies into the country. Despite strenuous Mennonite efforts to create an avenue for independent mutual aid, MCC finally had to work under the umbrella of the American Relief Administration (ARA), which was directed by Herbert Hoover, and an agreement was signed August 20, 1921 after "tedious negotiations" with Soviet government representatives.[3] The new government was exceedingly sensitive to outside interference, especially in view of the United States' and allies' weak military attempts to overthrow the Communists at the end of World War I.

The ARA presented itself as a private philanthropy, but it received $18 million from Congress and surplus goods from the War Department.[4] Hoover remains the unsung hero of the first chapter of MCC history, perhaps unacknowledged because Mennonites did not want to highlight their alliance with the U.S. government. All Mennonite aid to Russia came through ARA channels from the north by way of Petrograd, rather than from the south by way of Constantinople, where Miller was assigned.

(Endnotes)

1 John Roth, in a telephone conversation, March 2, 2010, noted that noted storyteller Peter J. Dyck and others of Dutch-Russian background told of MCC origins with Orie Miller at the center.

2 http://mcc.org/about/history, accessed March 3, 2010.

3 Herbert Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: The Cabinet and the Presidency, 1920-1933* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1952), 23.

4 Benjamin M. Weissman, *Herbert Hoover and Famine Relief to Soviet Russia: 1921-1923* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1974), 35. Weissman wrote: "And to millions of Europeans, the ARA continued to symbolize America—the generous, successful giant who dispensed food to entire populations at the stroke of Herbert Hoover's pen."

Russland Mennonitische Studienkommission *member B.H. Unruh (left) and Orie O. Miller, one of the first three Mennonite Central Committee workers.*

Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen

American Mennonite Central Committee workers in Russia. Front row (left to right): C.E. Krehbiel, representative in Molotchna; Alvin J. Miller, director in Russia; P.C. Hiebert, MCC chair, Arthur W. Slagel, representative in Alexandrovsk. Back row (left to right): Heinrich Epp, Mary Heinrichs, Heinrich Sawatzky, Jacob Suderman, Heinrich Martens, Mrs. Heinrich Martens, Gerhard Peters.

Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen

that door was closed. On the other side were the Old Mennonites, whose work in post-World War I relief and reconstruction had put them ahead of the Russians in program organization and in number of overseas volunteers. But the Old Mennonites were hampered by factionalism between youth and adults and by conservatives who resisted being unequally yoked with other Christians. Both the Russians and the Old Mennonites told their constituencies that the recommendation of the *Studienkommission* for a united American response was a primary reason for pursuing unprecedented cooperation.

Representing the Old Mennonites at Prairie Street were MRCWS president Aaron Loucks from Scottdale, Pa., secretary Levi Mumaw from Scottdale and treasurer George L. Bender from Elkhart, as well as denominational moderator Sanford C. Yoder from Kalona, Iowa; D.H. Bender from Hesston, Kan., Vernon Smucker from Scottdale; Orie Miller from Akron, Pa.; Ernest E. Miller from Rawson, Ohio; Daniel D. Miller from Middlebury, Ind.; Arthur Slagel from Flanagan, Ill.; and Eli G. Reist from Mount Joy, Pa. Only four Russian Mennonites were present: ERCMNA chair Hiebert from Hillsboro, Kan.; General Conference Mennonite Church ministers H.H. Regier from Mountain Lake, Minn., and W.J. Ewert from Hillsboro, plus *Studienkommission* member A. A. Friesen. (While he was in Elkhart, the other three members were speaking at churches at Pretty Prairie, Kan., and Deer Creek, Okla.)

In the evening session of July 27 and again on the morning of July 28, the meeting participants considered "the advisability of calling a general conference of all the Mennonites in America."[8] That radical proposal was set aside, and they instead created an interim three-man committee—

Hiebert, Regier and Mumaw—chose the name "Mennonite Central Committee for Russian Relief" and planned to make the arrangement permanent some months later at a meeting in Chicago. The minutes of the first meeting also offered a provisional list of cooperating "organizations on our list": MRCWS, ERCMNA, Emergency Relief Commission of the General Conference Mennonite Church, Relief Committee of the Central Conference of Mennonites, Mennonite Brethren Church and Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Church. That list would grow in the following months.

It has been the genius of MCC that Mennonite folk at the grass roots identify so personally and so strongly with its history and its ministries. Shall we insist that one or another of the origin narratives is correct and that others are wrong? Perhaps it would be better to accept a pattern of polygenesis, to let a hundred flowers bloom, or at least to allow the Old Mennonites and the Russians, not to mention the wide variety of other ethnic groups who have become part of the MCC story since 1920, to have their say.

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(Endnotes)

1 For shorthand, this article refers to these groups with the labels they most often used for each other. A version of this article appears in *A Table of Sharing, Mennonite Central Committee and the Expanding Networks of Mennonite Identity* (Telford, PA: Cascadia, 2011), 66-83.

2 Fred Richard Belk, *The Great Trek of the Russian Mennonites to Central Asia 1880-1884* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1976), 176-189. Walter R. Ratliff, *Pilgrims on the Silk Road: A Muslim-Christian Encounter in Khiva* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010), 171-175.

3 James C. Juhnke, *A People of Two Kingdoms: The Political Acculturation of the Kansas Mennonites* (Newton, KS: Faith and Life Press, 1975), 88.

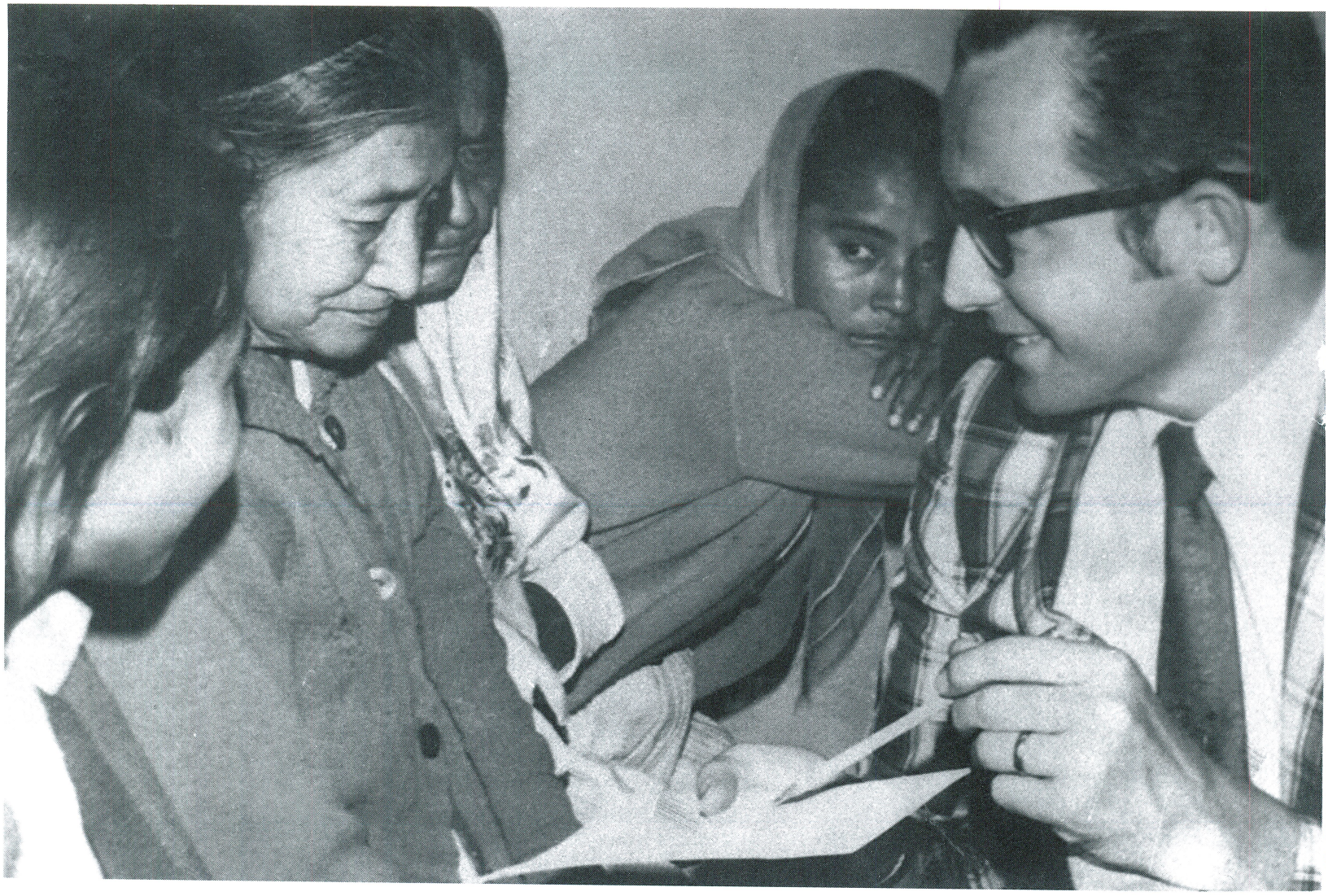
4 Fast's mutual aid efforts were acknowledged in Russia by Peter M. Friesen, in his massive work, *Die Alt-Evangelische Mennonitische Brüderschaft in Russland (1789-1910) im Rahmen der mennonitischen Gesamtgeschichte* (Halbstadt, Taurien: Verlagsgesellschaft Reduga, 1911), part 2, 69. Friesen called it *"Eine Ehre für die Amerikaner—Gott lohne es ihnen!—und eine traurige Reminiscenz für uns."* ("An honor for the Americans—God grant it to them—and a sad memory for us!") Apparently Friesen was embarrassed that the Mennonites in Russia, in relatively prosperous times, had to depend on aid from the outside.

5 M.B. Fast, *Geschichtlicher Bericht wie die Mennoniten Nordamericas ihren armen Glaubensgenossen in Russland jetzt und früher geholfen haben. Meine Reise nach Sibirien und zurück nebst Anhang wann und warum die Mennoniten nach Amerika kamen und die Gliederzahl der verschiedenen Gemeinden.* (Reedley, CA: Published by the author, 1919).

6 Guy F. Hershberger, "Historical Background to the Formation of the Mennonite Central Committee," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 44/3 (July 1970): 213-244. In addition to this excellent article, Hershberger worked on a book manuscript, which he did not complete, tentatively titled "The Mennonite Church and Foreign Relief 1898: A Twentieth Century Expression of the Anabaptist Theology of Discipleship." Located in the Archives of the MCUSA in Goshen, Indiana. Hershberger considered Old Mennonite "foreign relief" to be a twentieth century phenomenon, with an initial project in 1898 to aid famine victims in India. Old Mennonite aid to Russian immigrants in the 1870s was for their settlement in North America and not, strictly speaking, "foreign relief."

7 Daniel Kauffman, "Unity," *Gospel Herald* (July 22, 1920): 337.

8 "Report of the Mennonite Relief Committees, Elkhart, Ind., July 27, 1920," *Gospel Herald* (August 19, 1920): 413-15.



Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities worker Ed King, along with his wife, Gloria, started Amor Viviente *in the early 1970s, which became a major neo-Pentecostal movement in Honduras.*

Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen

The birth and growth of Anabaptism in Honduras

Mission and migration

by Jaime Prieto

Lancaster Conference's Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities (EMBMC) in 1950 became the first Mennonite presence in Honduras, establishing a mission in the rural coastal town of Trujillo. EMBMC missionaries and voluntary service workers then soon began meeting yearly to share their experiences and plan future action. In 1961, a council was formed, composed of ordained Mennonite missionaries and representatives from Honduran congregations.[1] A smaller executive committee was chosen by the council to carry out church projects, and committees oversaw education, a biblical institute, the annual conference and printed materials. A national women's society began in 1968,[2] and the following year a national youth organization came into being.[3] A constitution for the Honduran church was approved in 1969, including the official name: *Iglesia Evangélica Menonita Hondureña* (IEMH), or Honduran Evangelical Mennonite Church.[4] Thus was born a national organization that began to minimize the participation of the missionaries and encourage the participation of local church leaders. Nevertheless, changes came slowly. The denominational presidency remained in the hands of missionaries until

1972. In 1970, the church received full legal status, at which point began the transfer of properties from the EMBMC to the national organization.[5]

Social service programs were central to the Honduran Mennonite church from the start. Between 1958 and 1965, Mennonites invested $65,943 in voluntary service programs.[6] Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in 1965 located offices in the capital city of Tegucigalpa and hosted VS personnel.[7] During the 1960s, the Mennonites supported social development by participating in the ecumenical organization called the *Diaconía Evangélica Hondureña,* or Honduran Protestant Diaconate.[8] In 1968, in view of the growing autonomy of the Honduran Mennonite church, it founded its own organization to address social concerns, the *Comité de Servicio Cristiano* (COSEC), or Christian Service Committee.[9] Along with the founding of COSEC came the withdrawal of Mennonites from the larger ecumenical organization, but relations remained cordial with some mutual cooperation.[10]

A systematic national evangelism effort began in 1963 with the "Evangelism in Depth" program, which involved public campaigns, home visits and the establishment of cell groups.[11] There was great enthusiasm for evangelization in the 1960s. In 1966, 80 people made professions of faith with many of these preparing for baptism.[12] The theme of these evangelism efforts, "God Working Through Each Believer," necessitated education in biblical discipleship, which was promoted by the Committee for Evangelical Advancement.[13] Evangelistic campaigns continued periodically through 1970, organized by the committee.

Central American missionaries considered the literacy programs of ALFALIT, a faith-based international literacy program, as having potential to strengthen the church.[14] Honduras in the 1960s had an illiteracy rate of 55 percent. In this context, Anna May Yoder began an ALFALIT program in Honduras that became an important tool, enabling people to learn to learn to read but also get to know the Gospel. In September 1969, Edward King, who had previous experience with ALFALIT in Bolivia, took over the program in Honduras together with his wife, Gloria. The costs were borne by MCC and EMBMC. One of the purposes of the program was to use the Bible as the basis for learning to read.[15] ALFALIT had a tremendous impact in Honduras. From February to April 1971, 1,000 volunteer teachers were prepared, and by the end of May 3,000 adults had enrolled in the classes.

The Mennonite Biblical Institute began in the 1960s to educate church leaders from the rural communities of Trujillo, Santa Fe, Tocoa, La Concepción and Gualaco. The institute originally had no buildings; classes were offered in various places in intensive courses. When the EMBMC-run clinic closed in La Esperanza, the building came to be used to house the institute, and classes began there in 1965. The level of education of participants varied between those who had completed primary school and those who had completed only the first grade. As a practicum, students would go from house to house, preaching the Gospel.[16] Plans were begun in 1970 to move the institute to the city of La Ceiba.

In the 1970s, Honduras entered a period of political, economic and labor unrest that saw the emergence of a series of dictators who were supported by the military and the wealthy classes of the country.[17] These governments put in place repressive anti-labor policies in the name of anti-communism; some Christian social action programs fell under the same label. Also in

Social service programs were central to the Honduran Mennonite church from the start.

Trujillo, Honduras, site of the country's first Mennonite presence. Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities began work in the Atlantic coastal town in 1950.

Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen

The organization of *Amor Viviente* was strongly centered on Edward King, who chose several of the young men for discipleship training.

the 1970s, the Catholic Church underwent significant internal changes, giving rise to a charismatic stream on the more conservative side of the political spectrum as well as university programs for the formation of Christian democratic leaders on the reformist side of the spectrum.

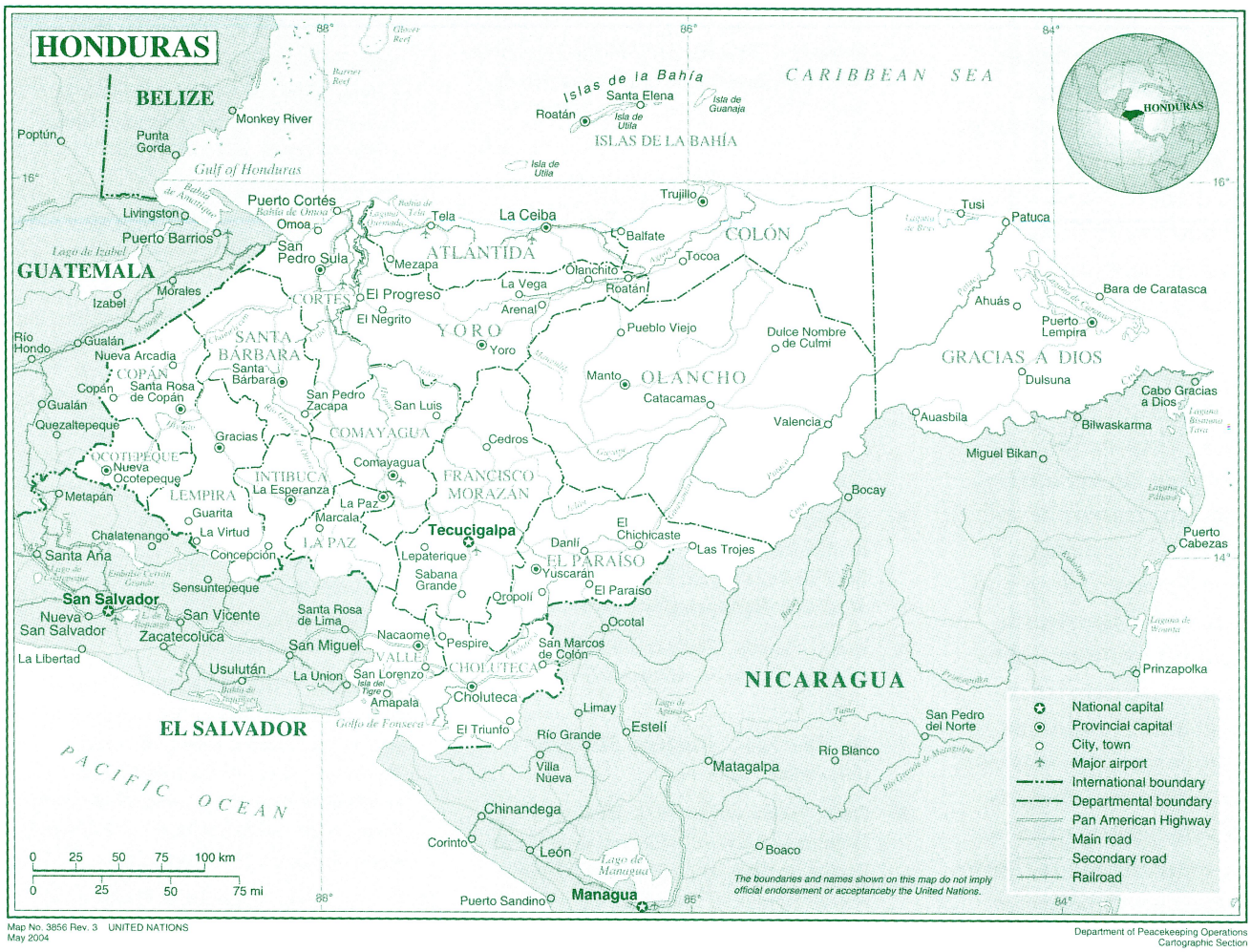
The conservative political forces took repressive action against progressive sectors of the Catholic Church. The torture and assassinations that took place in 1975 in Santa Clara de Olancho became the defining social, political and religious event of the 1970s. The Colombian priest Ivan Betancur and the U.S. priest Miguel Jeronimo Cypher were church community organizers who, along with nine of their peasant followers, were tortured and assassinated. Catholic radio stations were closed, and three more priests were arrested. These actions set the political tone for years to come.[18] A significant parallel development within Honduran Protestantism in the 1970s was the rise of neo-Pentecostal groups, who soon became significant numerically. Rather than being denominational, the neo-Pentecostal groups tended to call themselves simply "Christian" and focused their work among young university students, drug addicts and people of the middle and upper classes. Their worship services were very public and featured modern instruments and contemporary music. The pneumatology at the center of their theology was focused not on the church but rather on the spiritual power within individuals that allowed them to confront social conditions. A gospel of prosperity often accompanied this pneumatology as well.[19]

Children of Trujillo, circa 1951.

Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen

One of the four most significant neo-Pentecostal groups in Honduras in the 1970s was *Amor Viviente.* The church was born thanks to the efforts of EMBMC missionaries Edward and Gloria King, based on their charismatic experiences and personalities. They began their work in Tegucigalpa in 1973, reaching out to young people in poor neighborhoods with Bible studies and recreation programs. The young people who responded and were discipled by the Kings were ex-drug addicts who had been converted to Christ.[20] The Kings' ministry was marked by the charismatic expression that impacted both Latin American Roman Catholicism and Protestantism in the 1970s.[21] Edward King liked to go the top of El Picacho, a mountain north of Tegucigalpa, one day a week to survey the city below and spend the day in fasting and prayer. It was during such a time of contemplation in 1974 that *Amor Viviente,* or Living Love, came to him as the right name for the ministry.[22] At the July 1975 meeting of the General Council of the IEMH, it was decided that the Kings would continue working within the Honduran Mennonite church, submitting periodic written reports on their work with *Amor Viviente.* The council also decided that Edward King would mobilize a group of youth who would work in the churches, teaching and strengthening them.[23]

The organization of *Amor Viviente* was strongly centered on King, who chose several of the young men for discipleship training; they became known as "disciples of Edward King." His intention was to prepare these young men to be the future leaders of *Amor Viviente.* The group met once a week in their various houses for instruction from Edward King.[24] The faith and joy of these young people in following Jesus Christ was manifested spontaneously in the streets and areas surrounding the central park of Tegucigalpa, where they sang, testified and preached openly. Hector Urbina and Julio Sierra became notable preachers, traveling around on city buses, evangelizing and distributing tracts. Two musical groups were



Map No. 3856 Rev. 3 UNITED NATIONS
May 2004

Department of Peacekeeping Operations
Cartographic Section

formed and a regular coffee house emerged where young people would come to sing and play board games. Edward King would take these occasions to share the Word of God with them.

For almost a decade, *Amor Viviente* had no building of its own or fixed location, following King's maxim of investing in people, not buildings.[25] Nevertheless, the success of growth of the movement led to its institutionalization and eventually to the request and granting of separate legal status by the Honduran government. In 1978, the IEMH approved, and *Amor Viviente* continued with financing from the EMBMC.[26] In 1977, the first two *Amor Viviente* churches were built in Puerto Cortes and Tegucigalpa. Churches were established in Danli and Choluteca in 1978, in San Pedro Sula in 1980, in El Paraiso in 1981 and in the cities of La Ceiba and Progreso in 1984.[27]

As the movement became institutionalized, it became more strongly organized from within by means of cells or small growth groups who were the responsibility of strong leaders. Different groups were developed and identified by biblical models: the multitudes who followed Jesus for various reasons; the 120 who formed the base community and who were committed to Jesus and his mission; the 70 sent out by Jesus and who were close to Jesus during his ministry and charged to witness with word and life; and the smaller group, intimates of Jesus who shared his glory and suffering. In light of this understanding of Jesus' ministry, one can see how *Amor Viviente* movement created its own dynamic for growth and leadership development with a structure concentrated on the leader.

A group notably different from *Amor Viviente* was the Old Order Amish. In December 1968, Peter Stoll, an Old Order Amishman from Aylmer, Ont., purchased a 500-acre farm in Guaimaca.

Some of the families who began settling in the area came from Indiana from a group of Old Order Amish who opposed smoking and alcoholic drink.[28] Those who came from Ontario and Indiana were interested in establishing a settlement and in evangelization. From 1968 to 1974, 16 families moved to Honduras, establishing their own homes but living in close proximity. They maintained Amish customs but slowly learned Spanish as they cultivated the soil. They established an orphanage, a school for Honduran children and an English school for the Amish children. These innovations led to change, as there were marriages between Amish and Hondurans. The mountainous territory was not conducive for horses and buggies, so motorized vehicles began to be used, which eventually led the more conservative families to return to North America.[29] The group that remained in Honduras affiliated with the Beachy Amish. After 1986, there was a new division among the Amish. More than half of the families met in three congregations and affiliated with the Beachy Amish, receiving periodic visits from their bishop in Indiana. The more conservative group was organized into two congregations and affiliated with the Fellowship Churches.[30]

Excerpted with permission from Mission and Migration *by Jaime Prieto, the third volume in the Global Mennonite History series, published by Good Books and Pandora Press, 2010.*

(Endnotes)

1 James R. Hess, secretary, "Sesiones de Misioneros Ordenados, Misión Evangélica Menonita, Trujillo, Colón, Honduras, Minuta," September 7, 1961.

2 Efraín Padilla and Norman Hockman, secretaries, "Minutas del Concilio General de la Iglesia Evangélica Menonita Hondureña, Savá, Colón, Honduras," October 10-13, 1967.

3 Efraín Padilla and James Hess, secretaries, "Minutas del Concilio General de la Iglesia Evangélica Menonita Hondureña, La Ceiba, Honduras," July 17-25, 1968.

4 See "Propuesta Constitución del la Iglesia Evangélica Menonita Hondureña," October 14-16, 1968. James Hess, secretary, "Minutas del Concilio General de la Iglesia Evangélica Menonita Hondureña, La Ceiba, Honduras," July 17-25, 1968; Trujillo, Colón, July 10-11, 1969, 2-3.

5 "Minutas del Concilio General de la Iglesia Evangélica Menonita Hondureña, Savá," April 20-24, 1970, 5. See also "Honduras," *Missionary Messenger,* (June 1971), 8.

6 Paul G. Landis, "Christianity in Shoe Leather," *Missionary Messenger* (March 1965), 2-3.

7 See "Honduras," *Missionary Messenger* (November 1965), 11.

8 Efraín Padilla and James R. Hess, secretaries, "Minutas del Concilio General de la Iglesia Evangélica Menonita Hondureña, Trujillo, Colón, Honduras," March 27-29, 1967, 3.

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The back page

All were welcome

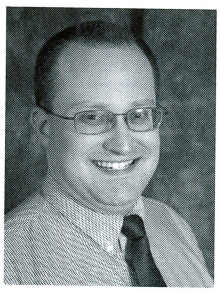
At a March 7 news conference at the Mennonite Church USA office in Elkhart, Ind., a wide range of denominational leaders officially spoke out against legislative efforts to clamp down on undocumented immigrants. It probably goes without saying that the public didn't ignore it. After all, immigration is probably the most incendiary issue in America today.

In response to the *Elkhart Truth*'s coverage of the news conference, "trueamerican" posted on the newspaper's website: "I am a Christian who beleives [sic] the ENTIRE Bible!! We are taught that we should obey our laws!!" That sentiment was shared by many others on the website.

While they may profess belief that complete fidelity to the state is a basic Christian tenet, the Bible is filled with stories proclaiming that faith in God trumps obedience to human laws. It starts with the first chapter of Exodus and the story of the Hebrew midwives who let newborn Hebrew boys live despite Pharaoh's instructions otherwise, goes through the accounts of Daniel, Esther, Peter and others, and concludes with Revelation, written by John on the island of Patmos, where he had been exiled because his first loyalty was to God and Christ, not the Roman authorities.

Against that background, civil disobedience is even more prominent in Mennonite history, including accounts of extending God's love to people who have been deemed illegal. The 1970s and '80s saw a dramatic influx of Central Americans coming to the United States, many of them to escape the political and social turbulence, even very real threats of death, in their home countries. Yet the Reagan administration had tightened regulations so much that many of the refugees could not enter the country legally. By 1985, nearly 500 congregations, including a number of Mennonite ones, had responded by declaring themselves as sanctuaries, willing to provide safe haven for those seeking safety and security despite the illegalities.

The increase of Central American newcomers also helped produce an explosion in Hispanic Mennonite numbers in the United States. Twenty-three new congregations were started in the 1970s alone. All were welcome, documented or not. In fact, there were enough undocumented church members that Mennonite Central Committee in 1978 started the Mennonite Hispanic Immigration Service to assist those facing immigration issues.



The question of undocumented immigrants is overflowing with complexities and ambiguities. But an examination of the past gives a pretty clear indication how the church should respond.

—*Rich Preheim*

Mennonite Historical Bulletin

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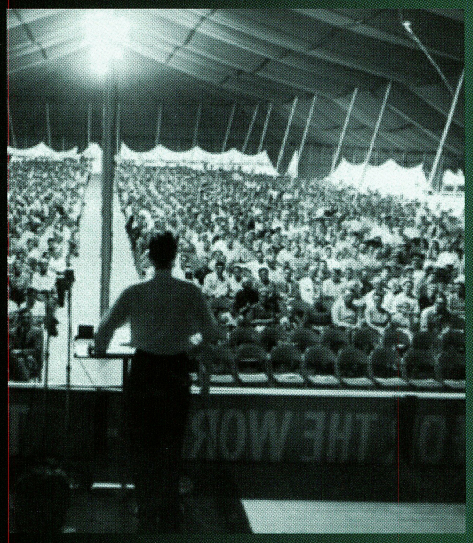
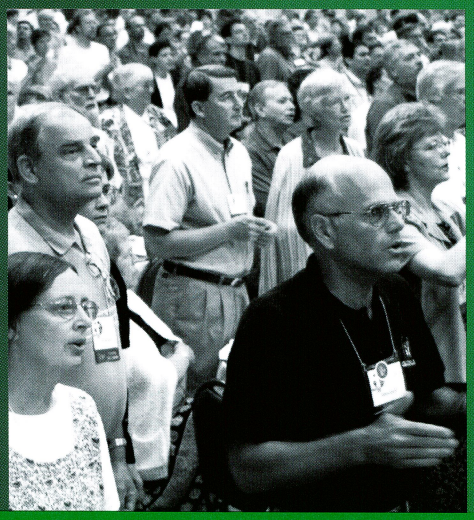
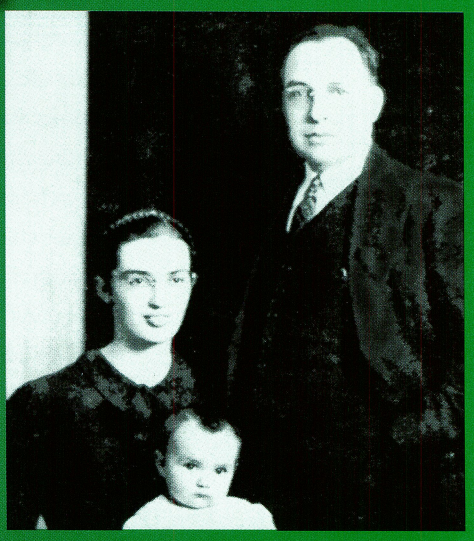
Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee

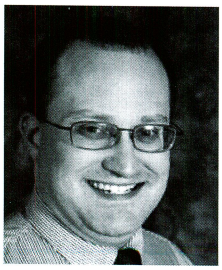




100 Years *of* Minding Mennonite Memory



Since the world hasn't ended, we want to tell our stories better



Rich Preheim, director
Mennonite Church USA
Historical Committee

Scripture makes it abundantly clear that God, God's love and God's purpose are unchanging. Everything else, well, that's another matter. As has been oft noted, change is a constant in human existence.

That includes this magazine. With this issue, *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* is unveiling a new, cleaner, more professional and more inviting look. Over the next several issues, the new design will be accompanied by the introduction of new features. All this is being done because we Mennonites have stories to tell in order to nurture our faith and inform others, and we want to make those stories as accessible and as readable as possible. We want to tell them the best we can.

Because the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee, which publishes *Mennonite Historical Bulletin,* is commemorating a century of denominational historical ministry in 2011, this particular issue focuses on church history during the past 100 years. That's a lot of stories – and a lot of change.

Change is actually predominant for the Historical Committee right now. It has been a decade since the formation of Mennonite Church USA, and we are examining what we have done in the recent past and what we might do in the foreseeable future in order to be a vibrant, vital part of the church's witness. For example, we have already posted more than 1,000 photos on Flickr in order to increase accessibility to our archival materials. Check them out at www.flickr.com/photos/mennonitechurchusa-archives. We are also working on new website, which should go live later this summer, increasing the usability of our resources.

But we're going much deeper than that. We are also going to evaluate our responsibilities, how we relate to the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board (to which the Historical Committee is responsible), funding systems and more. We covet your prayerful support as we go through this exciting but challenging process.

We can, of course continue this project because Harold Camping's well-publicized but kooky doomsday prediction for May 21, 2011, was wrong. Camping is the civil engineer turned radio evangelist whose failed foretelling drew wide attention this spring. It wasn't his first time. He had forecasted the Rapture in 1994 but obviously didn't learn from that experience.

But then Camping didn't learn from others' experiences either. Ever since Christ ascended into Heaven two millennia ago, a parade of prognosticators have proclaimed, with various degrees of specificity, when the Messiah would return. They also didn't get it. The early church believed the end was imminent. Saint Martin of Tours was convinced it would happen before 400 A.D. The close of the first millenium generated apocalyptic anxieties, which would be repeated 1,000 years later. Pope Innocent III said the end would come in 1284, or 666 years after Islam's founding. And the list goes on and on.

Not even Christ knows when the end will come. That's one of the lessons of history.

Even some of our own Anabaptist forebears engaged in such predictions. Melchior Hoffman, an early leader of the movement, set 1533 as the date of the Second Coming, later revised to 1534. That year some of Hoffman's followers led the infamous takeover of Muenster in order to usher in the New Jerusalem.

Since then, the predictions have continued unabated, including by notable figures such as Charles Wesley, Joseph Smith, Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell and Jake Van Impe. Then there are those who have become known only because they have heralded the End Times, such as Hal Lindsey and the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Their poor track record only confirms Christ's statement, as recorded in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, that not even he knows when the end will come. That's one of the lessons of history. Which means the Historical Committee will continue its process of change for the foreseeable future.

Unless Camping is correct about October 21.

100 Years *of* Minding Mennonite Memory

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Mennonite Church USA
Historical Committee

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Annals *News and notes from today and yesterday*

New website commemorates CPS

In 1941, with war raging in Europe, American conscientious objectors heeded their religious convictions against violence. Instead of joining the military, they reported to the first Civilian Public Service (CPS) camps. Now 70 years later and with 21st-century technology, the CPS story has been memorialized with the May launch of civilianpublicservice.org, a website about the workers and their work.

The central features of the website are two searchable databases, one of every CPS worker and one of every CPS camp. Nearly 12,000 men served in 235 camps during and immediately after World War II.

The idea for the project originated at a CPS reunion in Kansas in 2008 and was carried forward by Carl and Rosalind Andreas of Burlington, Vt. Carl served at Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) camps at Colorado Springs, Colo., and Gulfport, Miss. MCC hosts the website and devoted staff time to the initiative. Also supporting the project were Quaker and Church of the Brethren groups, the Center on Conscience and War, historians and archivists, including the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee.

"The website will be a great resource for historians, students and family members of CPS workers," said Titus Peachey, MCC U.S. peace education director. "It will inspire curiosity about the past even as it sparks discussion about how to nurture and protect conscience against killing in our day."

Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen

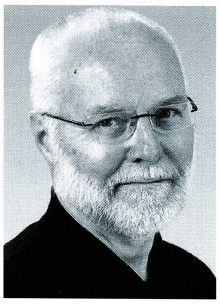
An instructor prepares Harry Mishler of Civilian Public Service camp 103, Missoula, Mont., for training as a smokejumper. Instead of serving in the military, Mishler and his fellow campers fought and prevented forest fires.

The website was introduced at a May 15 ceremony at Patapsco, Md., site of the first CPS camp, which was run by the Quakers' American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). Speakers included Carl Andreas, historian Edward Orser from the University of Maryland-Baltimore County and representatives from MCC, AFSC and the Center on Conscience and War.

Missions organization recognizes expert on Europe Europe

The stories of persecution and faith of Anabaptists in the 16th century are important and well-known. So should such stories from the 20th century, said Walter Sawatsky, professor of church history and mission at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind.

Sawatsky, who had long served as Mennonite Central Committee's coordinator of relations with Eastern Europe and Russia, earlier this year was honored for his work by the Council of International Anabaptist Ministries at the organization's annual meeting. In his keynote address, "Serious Co-Mission in Eastern Europe: Reflections on 20 Years of Post-Communism," he said, "Too often [Mennonites] do not know about the decades of testing, of valiant witness, of failure and collapse, of spiritual death of the church and then its resurrection." Sawatsky was also presented a festschrift titled *History and Mission in Europe: Continuing the Conversation.*



Sawatsky

"Recovering the stories of the people of Eastern Europe is a unique gift to those who live there," said Mary Raber, a Mennonite Mission Network worker in Ukraine. "In some sense, the telling of history is part of the prophetic task."

The Council of International Anabaptist Ministries includes the Brethren in Christ, Conservative Mennonite Conference, Evangelical Mennonite Conference, Mennonite Brethren, Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA. – *Mennonite Mission Network*

TAKE FIVE

Earliest camps in Mennonite Church USA

(Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church)

1941 – Camp Men-O-Lan, Quakertown, Pa.
1942 – Hidden Valley Camp, Los Angeles
1943 – Oklahoma Mennonite Retreat Grounds, Hydro, Okla.
1943 – Laurelville Mennonite Camp, Mount Pleasant, Pa.
1944 – Little Eden Camp, Onekama, Mich.

Mennonite Camping Association logo

Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen

Leaving soon

This 1950 evangelistic sign in Scottdale, Pa., was sponsored by Mennonite Publishing House, which was also located in Scottdale. After years of financial difficulties and changes in religious publishing, the publishing house is shutting down this summer after 106 years of operation. Mennonite Publishing Network, which ran the publishing house, is merging with Third Way Media, formerly part of Mennonite Mission Network, to form MennoMedia, which will be based in Harrisonburg, Va. Mennonite Publishing House began in 1905 as the privately owned Gospel Witness Company. It was succeeded in 1908 by the Mennonite Church's new Mennonite Publication Board, which assumed the operation of the publishing house. As part of the creation of Mennonite Church USA in 2002 the board merged with the General Conference Mennonite Church's publishing ministry to create Mennonite Publishing Network.

Report reveals Mennonite participation in the Holocaust

Despite earlier claims to the contrary, European Mennonites participated in the Nazi's "final solution" to exterminate the continent's Jews during World War II, according to findings by Gerhard Rempel, history professor emeritus at West New England College in Springfield, Mass.

The first concentration camp outside of Germany was Stutthof, in the heavily Mennonite area of Danzig and Elbing in West Prussia. A Mennonite builder had significant responsibility for constructing the camp, and a number of Mennonites served as camp guards, some of whom were later found guilty of war crimes and imprisoned. One former Mennonite – he reportedly renounced his church membership in 1931, shortly after joining the Nazi Party in Danzig – was put in charge of implementing anti-Jewish measures in the Caucasus.

But even more local Mennonites benefited from the slave labor provided by the prisoners. A church member who was also a member of the notorious SS was called the "Lord of Death and Life" because of the terrible way he treated laborers working for him. But other Mennonites treated prisoners well. One farmer was threatened with banishment to the concentration camp because he provided breakfast for his workers.

At Zaporozhia, in the region of the Chortitza Mennonite colony, some 44,000 Jews were massacred by the German army, which took over that part of Russia in 1941. The occupiers placed a number of Mennonites in civil leadership positions because of their German ethnicity. Among them was the new mayor of Zaporozhia, who ordered the city's Jews to wear armbands with the Star of David. Other local Mennonites joined the police or German military units responsible for the killings. – *Mennonite Quarterly Review*

Study documents Dutch wealth

The late 16th and 17th centuries were the Netherlands' Golden Age, a rising tide of prosperity and progress that also lifted the financial fortunes of at least some Dutch Mennonites. That is particularly evident in the maritime business, where Mennonites were instrumental in the creation of the notable Dutch East India Company in 1602.

Even before the company was formed, three Mennonites were investors and directors in an earlier business that sent ships to East Asia. They did not join the new venture, but 13 to 15 other Mennonites did, discovered Mary Sprunger, history professor at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. In fact, the single largest investor in the Dutch East India Company was a church member, Pieter Lijntgens, who bought 105,000 guilders worth of shares. Syverdt Pieterss Sem invested 12,000 guilders and was on the board of directors, while four other Mennonites invested 1,000 guilders or more.

To put those numbers in perspective, in 1600, one adult needed 80 guilders a year for subsistence, and a merchant's house might cost as much as 15,000 guilders. Thirty years later, only 100 Amsterdam households had property tax values of 100,000 guilders or more.


Photo by Mary Harsh/Flikr Creative Commons

Detail from "A View of the Texel" by Dutch artist Ludolf Backhuisen (1631-1708).

Mennonite involvement in the company began to wane within a few years as it waged war against Portuguese interests for control of Asia. Whatever their religious convictions on the matter, it was considered unprofitable. – *Journal of Mennonite Studies*

100 years

John Horsch of the Mennonite Church (left) and C.H. Wedel of the General Conference Mennonite Church, pioneers and inspirations in denominational historical ministry.

A century of minding Mennonite memory

By Rich Preheim

For North American Mennonites, the 19th century concluded, paradoxically, with the promise of a bright future but clouded by looming discontent. The introduction of mission programs, institutes of higher education, publishing houses and other enterprises were transforming the church and its world. And it was also beginning to produce profound cracks in the church, separating those who enthusiastically embraced the newness from those who were more guarded about its potential effects. For the conservatives, innovation wasn't necessarily bad, but where would it end? Change must be controlled before it undermined the church. The progressives, meanwhile, believed change would foster greater faithfulness and so should be encouraged.

100 Years *of* Minding Mennonite Memory

This was the emerging climate for the Mennonite Church (MC) and General Conference Mennonite Church (GCMC) in 1911 when, coincidentally or providentially, each denomination inaugurated its first historical ministry. So the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee, the inheritor of those previous efforts, is commemorating its centennial this year. Like any anniversary, this is a profoundly appropriate time to consider not only the origins of a couple of organizations but, more importantly, what they reflect: the efforts of two bodies of faith to navigate earthly pitfalls.

On September 2, 1911, 22 men attending the GCMC triennial assembly in Bluffton, Ohio, gathered to discuss the collection and preservation of historical materials pertinent to the faith. The result was the creation of the Mennonite Historical Association of North America. The goal was to demonstrate Mennonite beliefs as vibrant, usable and wholly compatible with evolving contexts. "[W]hat a sad commentary it is upon the historical sense of our people when the only records available are those upon the tomb-stones," association charter member Silas M. Grubb told the delegates.

Eight weeks later, the MC biennial delegate assembly at Johnstown, Pa., unanimously approved appointing a 10-member committee to write an "authentic Church History" as part of a greater push to develop "standard literature" on the church's "Bible principles." Unlike their GCMC brethren, MC leaders wanted to use history to resist change's corruption and shore up a time-honored faith with roots in the first-century church.

The MC Historical Committee included John Horsch and J.B. Smith. Horsch, a writer and editor, was the denomination's

leading historian and an ardent foe of liberalism, while Smith was a staunchly conservative instructor at Hesston (Kan.) College and would become the first president of the staunchly conservative Eastern Mennonite University at Harrisonburg, Va. The founders of the GCMC association, meanwhile, included many leading progressives. Looming large was one person who wasn't there. C.H. Wedel, president of Bethel College in North Newton, Kan., died the previous year at just 50 years of age. He had employed modern academic methods, which conservatives considered suspect, to write a four-volume history of the Mennonites and other works. Missionary H.R. Voth, an early force in the association, was applying similar techniques in his anthropological studies of Arizona's Navajo, among whom he was serving.

Each organization would go through a number of changes through the years. The MC Historical Committee, which became a denominational standing committee, was initially based in Scottdale, Pa., where Horsch lived. In 1937, the Mennonite Church authorized the establishment of denominational archives, located on the Goshen (Ind.) College campus, with the Historical Committee serving as custodian, thus moving the committee to Goshen.

The Mennonite Historical Association was officially independent of but nevertheless reported to the General Conference Mennonite Church. That changed in 1939 when it became an official GCMC standing committee. The historical records it gathered were kept at Bethel College. The committee was abolished in 1969 during denominational restructuring, brought back in 1975, cut again, revived again, then eliminated for the last time in 1993.

Like any anniversary, this is a profoundly appropriate time to consider not only the origins of a couple of organizations but, more importantly, **what they reflect:** the efforts of two bodies of faith to navigate earthly pitfalls.

Work on a new historical organization began in 1997 as part of the merger process of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church. The Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee, along with the rest of the new denomination, was officially born in 2002.

The Historical Committee embraces the disparate legacies of its two predecessor ministries. They are both part of the committee's mission of preserving our heritage, interpreting our faith stories and proclaiming God's work among us. It is essential that Mennonite Church USA knows its historic and unshakable foundations of love, peace, service and fidelity to the God of all ages and then be able to apply them in the 21st century and beyond.

Rich Preheim is director of the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee.

The Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee

preserves and promotes Mennonite/Anabaptist history in a variety of ways. The largest component of the organization's work is its archives in Goshen, Ind., and North Newton, Kan. They house a total of 20 million documents from individuals, congregations, area conferences, denominational programs and other related organizations dating to the 18th century. Archival staff annually respond to nearly 1,000 inquiries from researchers around the world.

The Historical Committee also publishes *Mennonite Historical Bulletin*, a quarterly magazine of popular church history; sponsors the John Horsch Mennonite History Contest for students in high school, college and graduate school/seminary; organizes conferences and seminars; and provides consultation services. Staff are also available to speak on historical topics. – RP

100 Years *of* Minding Mennonite Memory

1911

CRACKING THE GLASS CEILING

by Rich Preheim

Portrait of Ann J. Allebach by Harry L. Johnston

Mennonite Heritage Center, Harleysville, Pa.

It took barely two weeks for 1911 to make sure it was going to be an especially notable year. On January 15 at Philadelphia's First Mennonite Church, a General Conference Mennonite Church congregation, Ann J. Allebach became the first Mennonite woman ordained for ministry. The decision to ordain her had been the subject of no small amount of debate. But J.W.B. Schantz, pastor of Allebach's home congregation, Eden Mennonite Church at Schwenksville, Pa., preached "a masterful argument for the admission of women into all fields where their talents and their devotion offer them opportunities to do good," based on John 20:17-18, reported *The Mennonite*, the denominational periodical.

Those opportunities for women to do good would expand during the course of the year. But Allebach's ordination was especially momentous because it was in stark contrast to traditional understandings of the limited roles and responsibilities of roughly half the church's membership. Yet while it was a groundbreaking event, it had nominal immediate effect on the church, at least in part because Allebach never pastored a Mennonite congregation. It would be another 72 years before another woman would be ordained and put a permanent hole in the stained-glass ceiling.

She was originally a teacher by vocation. But Allebach, an energetic, adventurous woman, moved to New York City in 1907 and became a leader in the women's suffrage movement; did post-graduate studies in education, philosophy and religion; and found her life's vocation in the church. Allebach joined the staff of a prestigious Episcopal parish, where her efforts included preaching, teaching Sunday school and Bible classes, starting a free kindergarten and jobs-training programs, and organizing religious conferences.

Allebach also remained in touch with her mentor, N.B. Grubb, a family friend and the influential pastor of First Mennonite Church. When she determined that God had called her to church work, she approached Grubb and Schantz about ordination. They agreed.

After her ordination, Allebach returned to New York City to continue her work, although she would periodically preach in Mennonite churches in eastern Pennsylvania. In 1916, she became pastor of a Reformed congregation on Long Island, where she would remain until a heart attack claimed her life in 1918 at the age of 43. Despite her extensive ministry elsewhere, however, Allebach remained a Mennonite, keeping her membership first at Eden and later at First. And she was listed among the ministers in the General Conference Mennonite Church yearbook until her death.

Coincidentally, Allebach would have ministerial company later in 1911 when, across the Atlantic in the Netherlands, Anna Zernike became the second Mennonite woman minister and the first to serve a Mennonite congregation.

More traditional but still significant opportunities for women increased elsewhere

in the United States during the year. With the advent of Mennonite missions in the late 19th century came the development of congregational women's sewing circles, which made clothing and bedding to be distributed by mission workers overseas and domestically. The proliferation of these groups in Lancaster Conference led to the 1911 formation of Associated Sewing Circles, the first women's organization beyond the congregation.

It didn't take long for sewing circles to form across the Mennonite Church as women, denied other opportunities, found an acceptable way to serve the church and God. A churchwide organization was inevitable, the inception of which was directly tied to another 1911 event that underscored the marginalization of women.

Menno S. Steiner, a pioneer mission worker and president of Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM), died of kidney disease in 1911. Not only did his death make his wife, Clara Eby Steiner, a widow at age 39, it blocked her only avenue for church work. When Menno was alive, she had been extremely active and keenly interested in the affairs and activities of the Mennonite Church, but, in the eyes of the denomination, only as the wife of an ordained man. There was hardly any place for Steiner to serve without a spouse. "I felt that if only I would not have had to give up my husband and the work I learned to love at the same time I would not have been so utterly forsaken," she later recalled.

Yet Steiner did find one outlet: forging a churchwide network connecting local sewing circles that would come to be known as the Women's Missionary and Service Commission and a precursor to Mennonite Church's Mennonite Women. An inaugural meeting was held in 1915 in conjunction with the biennial Mennonite Church delegate assembly. Also that year, the fledgling organization approached MBM about becoming an official auxiliary but was rebuffed. Nevertheless, the society increased dramatically in membership and activity in the following years.

By 1925, Steiner was ready to slow down and turn over her responsibilities to someone else. She wrote Emma Stutzman Yoder to ask if she would be willing to step in. Yoder never responded but, curiously, her husband did. Sanford C. Yoder was secretary of MBM, and he told Steiner he would put the matter on the agenda for their next board meeting. The next year MBM appointed a three-woman committee to coordinate the work of the sewing circles across the church. A decade after rejecting them, MBM had taken them over.

More encouraging developments came from the Great Plains in 1911 as a new Mennonite hospital in Beatrice, Neb., and an existing one in Mountain Lake, Minn., affiliated with the three-year-old Bethel Deaconess Hospital in Newton, Kan., affiliated with the General Conference Mennonite Church. That expanded options for women's service in the church and, because of the nurses' training programs at the Beatrice and Newton hospitals, also expanded employment opportunities. Also in existence in 1911 were Mennonite deaconess hospitals at Goessel, Kan., and American Falls, Idaho.

Rich Preheim is director of the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee.

Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen

Mennonite Church USA Archives-North Newton

Left: Clara Eby Steiner with her grandson Hugh Hostetler, 1920. Above: Deaconesses and other workers at the Mennonite hospital in Beatrice, Neb., circa 1920.

Other significant events of 1911 included:

- The Defenseless Mennonite Church (later called the Evangelical Mennonite Church and now the Fellowship of Evangelical Churches) and the Central Conference of Mennonites (now part of Mennonite Church USA's Central District Conference) create United Mennonite Board of Missions and sends a couple to explore potential mission fields in Congo. The organization changes its name to Congo Inland Mission the next year and in 1970 becomes Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission.
- The Mennonite Board of Education of the Mennonite Church officially discourages "all games which encourage the spirit of rivalry, intercollegiate contest, etc." at its affiliated schools.
- George R. Brunk II is born. Son and namesake of the influential Mennonite Church bishop, he would follow his father as a vociferous champion of conservatism in the church. A longtime professor and administrator at Eastern Mennonite College and Seminary at Harrisonburg, Va., he rose to prominence as a pioneering tent revivalist in the 1950s.
- John A. Sprunger dies at age 59. A wealthy business man in Berne, Ind., he devoted his life to Christian ministry in 1888 after the death of his only child. His efforts included starting an orphanage, a deaconess hospital and a publishing house.
- Andrew B. Shelly resigns from the General Conference Mennonite Church mission board after 37 years. He spent the last 22 of those years as secretary. He also was denominational president for 22 years and pastored West Swamp Mennonite Church, Quakertown, Pa., from 1872 until his death in 1913.
- Five students receive diplomas as two-year-old Hesston (Kan.) College graduates its first class.

SERVICE, SCHOOLS, SEX ...

and a sampling of other developments that shaped us during the past 100 years

Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen

Fordson tractors sent by Mennonite Central Committee to Russia.

1920 Mennonite Central Committee is organized to respond to the famine in Russia.

1916

Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference and Indiana-Michigan Amish-Mennonite Conference merge, the first reunion of Mennonites and Amish since their 17th century split. In the late 1800s, progressive Amish from coast to coast had formed several regional conferences, three of which will join the Mennonite Church by 1927.

Mennonite Church USA Archives-North Newton

Mennonite conscientious objectors at Camp Funston, Kan

1917

The outbreak of World War I painfully forces U.S. Mennonites to navigate the tensions between faith and country. Many Mennonite conscripts are subject to physical and emotional abuse and imprisonment for refusing to violate their pacifist beliefs. At home, church members are painted yellow, nearly lynched and victimized by arson. Other Mennonites, however, publicly declare their support for the war.

Mennonite Church USA Archives-North Newton

1912

Annie Funk, General Conference Mennonite Church missionary to India since 1906, dies while returning to the United States aboard the Titanic. She reportedly gave her place in a lifeboat to a mother and her children. The school in India where she taught is later renamed after her.

1916

One year after a preliminary meeting, several hundred women from sewing circles across the Mennonite Church gather at West Liberty, Ohio, and form a permanent organization to support mission work. Called the Women's Missionary Society, it's a forerunner to Mennonite Church USA's Mennonite Women.

1919

Young American men serving with the Mennonite Relief Commission for War Sufferers in France hold the first Young People's Conference, which many Mennonite Church leaders consider a threat to the church.

1921

Originally a department of Bluffton (Ohio) University, Witmarsum Theological Seminary becomes an independent institution and the first North American Mennonite post-graduate theological school. Witmarsum will close in 1931

100 Years *of* Minding Mennonite Memory

1923

Mennonite Weekly Review, based in Newton, Kan., rolls off the press and proceeds to link congregations, communities and conferences across the United States with its coverage of Mennonites of all kinds.

1925

The brainchild of German pastor Christian Neff to celebrate Anabaptism's 400th anniversary, the first Mennonite World Conference draws a handful people from four countries to Basel, Switzerland. In attendance is only one U.S. delegate, General Conference Mennonite Church president Henry J. Krehbiel. ▼

Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen

Attendees at the first Mennonite World Conference gathering in Basel, Switzerland, 1925.

1927

Mennonite Quarterly Review debuts. Published by the Mennonite Historical Society, it becomes the leading scholarly journal on Anabaptist history, thought and life.

1930

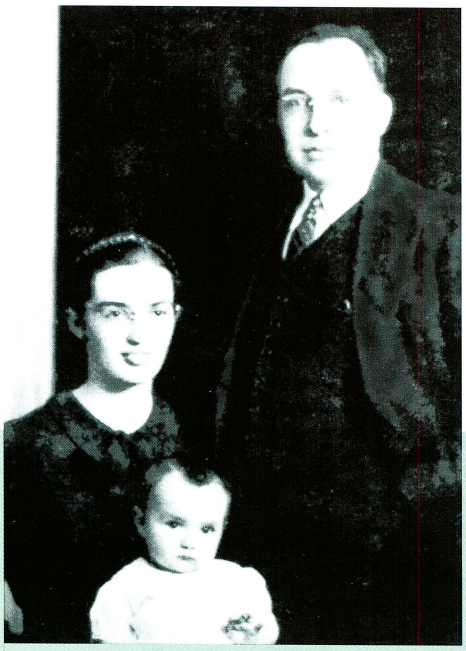
Mennonite Central Committee raises $100,000 to resettle nearly 2,000 Russian Mennonites refugees in Paraguay.

Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen

▲ Russian Mennonite refugees gather for worship in Riga, Latvia.

1934

Two years after Mennonite Board of Missions starts a Spanish-language congregation in Chicago, David Castillo is ordained to provide leadership, becoming the first Mennonite minister of color. ▶



Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen

David and Elsa Shank Castillo and daughter Anita.

1934

Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions, the mission agency of Lancaster Conference, sends its first overseas workers, taking the gospel to Tanzania. It's the first Mennonite initiative in East Africa.

Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen

▲ William Detweiler's twin sons Bill (left) and Bob in *The Calvary Hour* studio.

1936

While much of the church views radio with suspicion, Ohio Conference minister William Detweiler begins broadcasting *The Calvary Hour*, the first Mennonite radio ministry. It will remain on the air for 70 years. Three years later, General Conference Mennonite Church minister Theodore Epp starts *Back to the Bible*, which is still broadcast.

1938

Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., is the first Mennonite college to be accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, one of six regional accrediting bodies in the United States.

1938

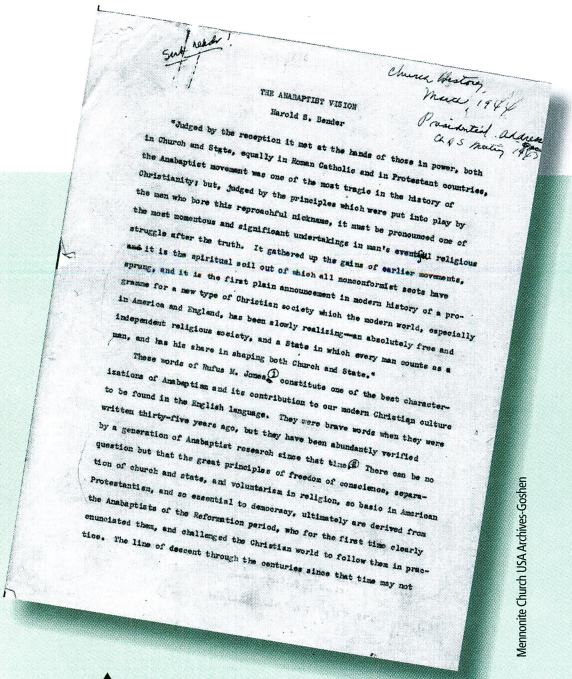
Eastern District Conference starts the first Mennonite camp, Camp Men-O-Lan near Quakertown, Pa.

1940

President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs the Selective Service and Training Act, instituting conscription but also including provisions for what would become Civilian Public Service.

1942

Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School opens its doors, the first of at least 15 Mennonite Church- or General Conference Mennonite Church-related high schools that would be started over the next two decades.



THE ANABAPTIST VISION

Harold S. Bender

"Judged by the reception it met at the hands of those in power, both in Church and State, equally in Roman Catholic and in Protestant countries, the Anabaptist movement was one of the most tragic in the history of Christianity; but, judged by the principles which were put into play by the men who bore this reproachful nickname, it must be pronounced one of the most momentous and significant undertakings in man's eventful religious struggle after the truth. It gathered up the gains of earlier movements, and it is the spiritual soil out of which all nonconformist sects have sprung, and it is the first plain announcement in modern history of a programme for a new type of Christian society which the modern world, especially in America and England, has been slowly realizing--an absolutely free and independent religious society, and a State in which every man counts as a man, and has his share in shaping both Church and State."

These words of Rufus M. Jones① constitute one of the best characterizations of Anabaptism and its contribution to our modern Christian culture to be found in the English language. They were brave words when they were written thirty-five years ago, but they have been abundantly verified by a generation of Anabaptist research since that time② There can be no question but that the great principles of freedom of conscience, separation of church and state, and voluntarism in religion, so basic in American Protestantism, and so essential to democracy, ultimately are derived from the Anabaptists of the Reformation period, who for the first time clearly enunciated them, and challenged the Christian world to follow them in practice. The line of descent through the centuries since that time may not

Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen

1943

On December 28, Harold S. Bender delivers his presidential address to the American Society of Church History. Called "The Anabaptist Vision," it's the greatest contemporary articulation of the principles of the faith.

1945

In its first church-wide application of the principle of mutual aid, the Mennonite Church creates Mennonite Mutual Aid (now Everence) to provide financial assistance to Civilian Public Service men returning home.

TEN THOUSAND VILLAGES®

1946

Edna Ruth Byler, visiting Puerto Rico, sees poor women's needlework and agrees to market it in the United States to provide income for them, creating the fair-trade organization now known as Ten Thousand Villages.

Civilian Public Service workers attend to patients at the Cleveland (Ohio) State Hospital.

Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen

Mennonite Central Committee worker Elfrieda Dyck led four ships of Russian Mennonite refugees to South America after World War II.

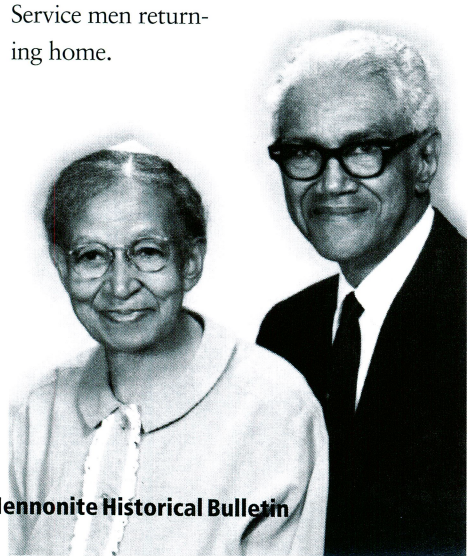
Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen

1946

Mennonite Central Committee's mobile meat canner hits the road for the first time.

1946

Ordained by Illinois Conference, Chicago church planter **James Lark** becomes the first African-American Mennonite minister. With their far-reaching work from Virginia to California, James and his wife, **Rowena**, play important roles in preparing the way for an increasingly diverse church.



1947

Mennonite Central Committee starts settling Russian Mennonite refugees in South America, most of them in Paraguay.

1947

Building on the experiences of Civilian Public Service workers in mental-health facilities, Mennonite Central Committee approves the creation of three mental-health "homes," one each in the eastern, midwestern and western parts of the United States.

1950

The Mennonite Central Committee trainee program starts. In its first five years, 123 young men and women from six countries come to the United States for one-year assignments.

1950

Spurred by the Civilian Public Service-era ethos of service, a Hesston, Kan., Sunday school class develops a volunteer disaster-response program initially called Mennonite Service Organization. Five years later it comes under Mennonite Central Committee oversight and is rechristened Mennonite Disaster Service.

Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen

▲ Brunk revival meeting, Goshen, Ind.

1951

Brothers George R. II and Lawrence Brunk launch Brunk Revivals, successfully melding understated Mennonite customs with highly expressive revivalism.

1951

Mennonite Central Committee starts the Pax program, sending volunteers to Europe to work on post-war reconstruction projects. Pax soon expands to Africa, South America and Southeast Asia. ▶

Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen

Pax worker Dean Hartman at Bechterdissen, Germany.

1952

A group of young American Mennonite graduate students, relief workers and missionaries in Europe gather for a retreat, leading to the creation of the Concern Movement. Through a series of publications over the next two decades, Concern participants repeatedly challenge the church in its understandings of Anabaptist faithfulness.

1955

Indicating a movement toward a more congregational polity, South Central Conference becomes the first in the Mennonite Church to phase out bishops, to be replaced by overseers serving three-year terms.

1955

The Call of the Cheyenne premiers, a General Conference Mennonite Church-produced film about GCMC mission efforts among Native Americans in Montana. It's the first professionally made Mennonite movie.

1953

Mennonite Economic Development Associates is founded by North Americans to provide capital to Russian Mennonite refugees resettled in Paraguay. While subsequently undertaking projects around the world, MEDA also becomes the place for Mennonite businesspeople to apply their expertise and resources.

1955

The first of the four-volume Mennonite Encyclopedia comes off the press. A one-volume update is published in 1990.

1955

The Mennonite Church adopts "The Way of Christian Love in Race Relations," a statement firmly declaring that racial discrimination is a sin and contrary to the work of the church. The General Conference Mennonite Church adopts the same statement the next year.

1957

The first Mennonite Central Committee relief sale is held on a farm near Morgantown, Pa.

Selling ice cream at Morgantown, Pa. relief sale. ▼

Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen

1957

The Middle District Conference of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Central Conference of Mennonites, originally an Amish group, join to form the GCMC Central District Conference, stretching from Iowa to Ohio.

Conservatives vs. progressives

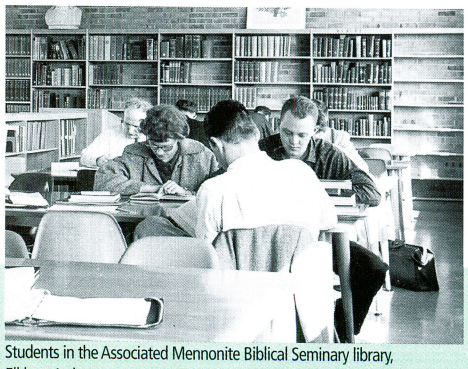
For the General Conference Mennonite Church and especially the Mennonite Church, the first half of the 20th century was defined by conflict between conservative and progressive forces. (They are sometimes called fundamentalists and modernists, respectively, but it's debatable how fundamentalist or modernist they were.) As Mennonites faced increasing acculturation, church members most resistant to change often borrowed from trends in broader Christian society, such as inerrancy of Scripture and dispensationalism, to reinforce traditional faith and practice. Meanwhile other members embraced higher education, new understandings of noncomformity and other innovations as compatible with Mennonite beliefs.

The resulting clashes claimed many casualties. In the Mennonite Church, disagreements over issues such as attire, life insurance and musical instruments caused a number of progressives, including entire congregations, to leave or be expelled from the fellowship; many subsequently joined the General Conference Mennonite Church. Concerns about orthodoxy prompted the Mennonite Church to close Goshen (Ind.) College in 1923-24. In the General Conference Mennonite Church, the tensions were most visible at its colleges. Both Bethel College in North Newton, Kan., and Bluffton (Ohio) University repeatedly had to fend off criticisms. As an alternative, a group of conservatives established Grace Bible Institute in Omaha, Neb., in 1943.

While conservative and progressive factions remained, the intensity of their differing views dramatically diminished after World War II.

Mennonite Disaster Service volunteers, Kansas, 1965.

Mennonite Church USA Archives-North Newton



Mennonite Church USA Archives-North Newton

Students in the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary library, Elkhart, Ind.

1958

The General Conference Mennonite Church's Mennonite Biblical Seminary moves from Chicago to Elkhart, Ind., to join with Goshen (Ind.) Biblical Seminary of the Mennonite Church to form Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

1962

Eugene Garber of Kalona, Iowa; Mark Martin of Harrisonburg, Va.; and Norman Martin of Chambersburg, Pa., form Choice Books to sell Christian books in retail outlets.

Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen

▲ Mealtime at the Mennonite Central Committee Atlanta unit house.

1960

Mennonite Central Committee begins a voluntary service unit in Atlanta to focus on race relations. Unit leaders are Vincent and Rosemary Harding.

1964

Columbus (Ohio) Mennonite Church and Rainbow Mennonite Church in Kansas City, Kan., become the first congregations to become members of both the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church.

1968

In the wake of widespread racial tensions in church and society, Mennonite Board of Missions creates the Minority Ministries Council to address such issues as they affect the Mennonite Church.

1972

Eerdmans publishes John Howard Yoder's landmark book *The Politics of Jesus*, establishing his status as an influential theologian and raising the profile of Mennonites beliefs. *The Politics of Jesus* would be named the fifth most important book of the 20th century by *Christianity Today* magazine.

1974

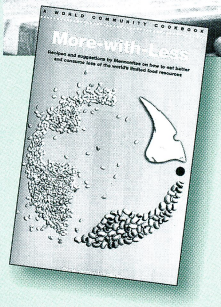
The first Mennonite Central Committee thrift shop in the United States opens in Bluffton, Ohio.

▲

1973

Illinois Conference ordains **Emma Richards** as minister at Lombard (Ill.) Mennonite Church, becoming the first woman credentialed for congregational ministry in the Mennonite Church. Three years later, Marilyn Miller becomes the first woman minister of a General Conference Mennonite Church congregation when Western District Conference ordains her to serve Arvada (Colo.) Mennonite Church.

Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen



1975

Mennonite Renewal Services is created to serve charismatic members of the Mennonite Church.

1976

More-with-Less Cookbook by **Doris Janzen Longacre** is published and becomes a runaway success, with nearly 850,000 copies sold over the next 25 years.

Moving into town

For some Mennonites, the church's landscape started to literally change after World War II, as increasing numbers left their traditional rural enclaves for opportunities in urban settings. By 1972, nearly 40 percent of General Conference Mennonite Church members lived in cities of 2,500 people or more, including 23 percent in cities of 25,000 or more. Twenty-six percent of Mennonite Church members lived in cities.

The reasons are many. Congregations in Manhattan, Kan.; Ann Arbor, Mich.; Columbus, Ohio; and elsewhere were started, at least in part, because of the growing number of Mennonites attending post-graduate school in those places. Other church members moved to the city for jobs other than agriculture-related. Voluntary service assignments also took Mennonites to urban areas.

1978

The first Victim-Offender Reconciliation Program in the United States begins in Elkhart, Ind.

1977

Gospel Herald, the official Mennonite Church magazine, publishes "A Pastoral Response to Homosexuality," publicly introducing an issue that dominates much of the church during the next several decades.

1983

The General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church meet at Bethlehem, Pa., for their first joint convention. It formally starts the process that results in the two denominations' merger into Mennonite Church USA in 2002.

1979

After simmering for more than a decade, the General Conference Mennonite Church holds a special mid-triennium delegate session to address war-tax resistance. Four years later, the denomination begins honoring employee requests not to withhold income taxes.

1984

Mennonite World Conference and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches hold two days of dialogue, the first of many formal conversations by Mennonites with other Christian groups in the following years.

1984

In an address at the Mennonite World Conference assembly at Strasbourg, France, author Ron Sider proposes the creation of "nonviolent peacekeeping force" to intervene in violent conflicts. His idea spawns the creation of Christian Peacemaker Teams two years later.

1987

Florence Driedger becomes the first woman to hold the top position of a Mennonite denomination when she is named president of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

Mennonite Church USA Archives-North Newton

General Conference Mennonite Church president Florence Driedger and Mennonite Church moderator Ralph Lebold at the 1989 joint MC-GCMC convention.

1994

West Coast Mennonites herald the coming denominational merger as one General Conference and two Mennonite Church area conferences reconfigure themselves into two dually affiliated conferences. The Arizona and California congregations of the GCMC Pacific District Conference joined with the MC Southwest Conference to form Pacific Southwest Conference. The northern Pacific District congregations and the MC Pacific Coast Conference form Pacific Northwest Conference.

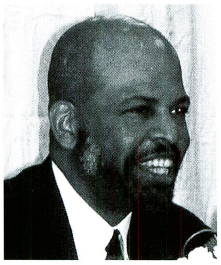
1995

Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church delegates, meeting jointly in Wichita, Kan., approve the merger of their two denominations and also approve the "Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective" to provide guidance on belief and practice.

1996

Lee Snyder is named president of Bluffton (Ohio) University, the first woman to lead a Mennonite college.

1997



New Mennonite Church moderator **Dwight McFadden** becomes the first person of color to lead a North American Mennonite denomination.

Dale Gehman/EMM

Delegates at the Mennonite Church-General Conference Mennonite Church joint convention at Nashville, Tenn., 2001, where the two denominations' merger was approved.

2002

After decades of work to merge the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church, the new Mennonite Church USA becomes official on February 1. The Canadian portion of the two denominations' membership had become Mennonite Church Canada two years earlier.

Developing diversity

Into the 1970s, diversity in the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church referred to African-Americans, Native Americans and Hispanics, either Mexicans or Puerto Ricans. But that definition expanded greatly over the last quarter of the 20th century. The conclusion of the Vietnam War brought thousands of refugees from Southeast Asia to the United States, hundreds of whom were sponsored by Mennonites. Other newcomers fled Haiti, Cuba and Uganda. But not all were escaping such dangerous situations. By century's end, Ethiopians, Garifuna, Hondurans, Indonesians, Nigerians, Taiwanese and many other immigrants had permanently changed the church in the United States.

Mennonite Historical Bulletin

Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee
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Building a foundation

100 Years *of* Minding Mennonite Memory

Mennonite Church USA Archives-North Newton

Ten years ago this summer in Nashville, Tenn., delegates from the General Conference Mennonite Church (GCMC) and Mennonite Church (MC) overwhelmingly approved finalizing the two denominations becoming Mennonite Church USA. That culminated a process that started at Bethlehem, Pa., in 1983 when the first joint MC-GC convention was held. During the 1983 opening worship, GCMC president Jake Tilitzky (left) and MC moderator Ross Bender (right) each placed a stone on top of a common foundation stone to symbolize the denomination's growing togetherness.

Mennonite Church USA

Historical Committee

Mennonite Historical Bulletin

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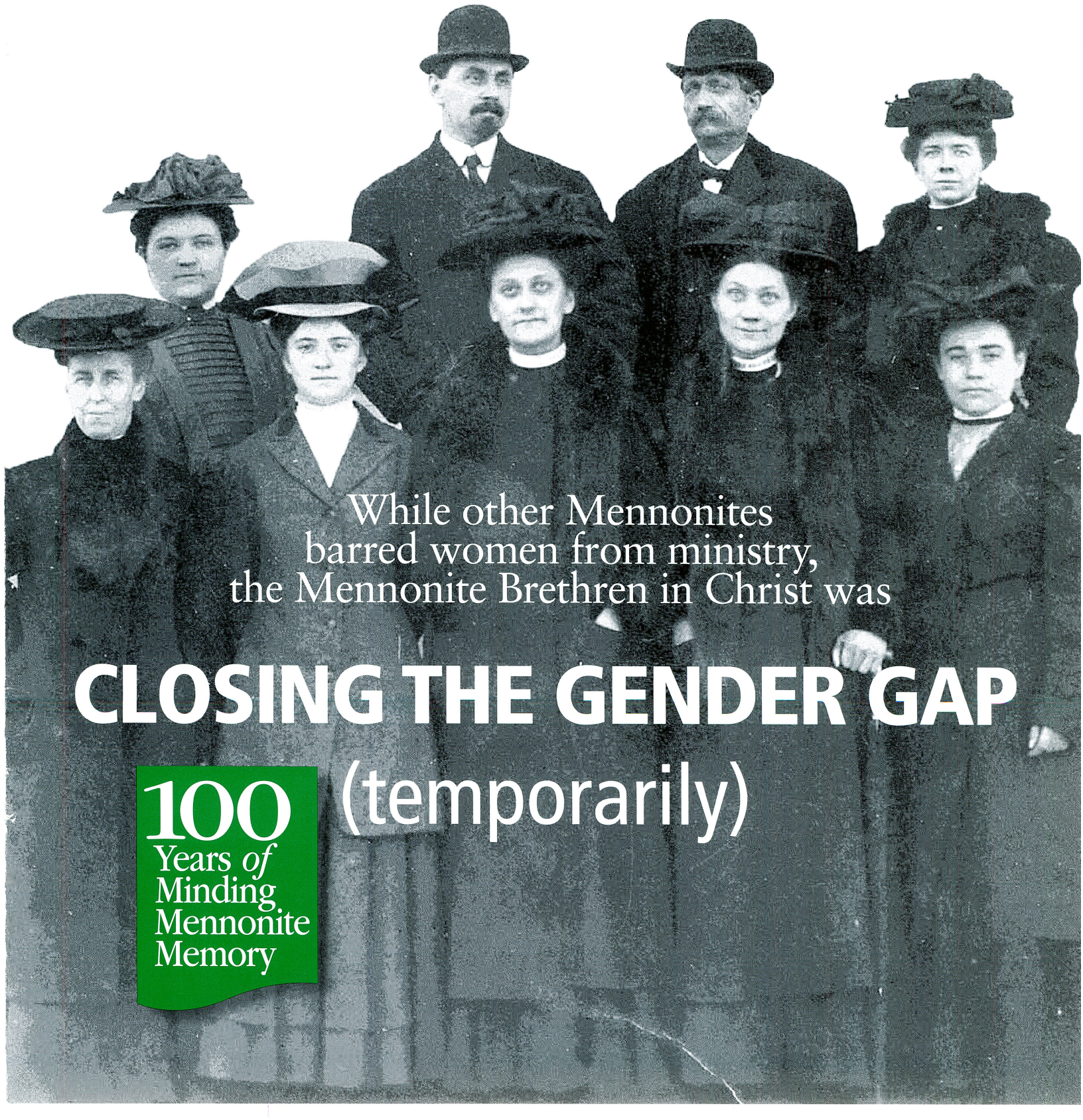
Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee



While other Mennonites barred women from ministry, the Mennonite Brethren in Christ was

CLOSING THE GENDER GAP (temporarily)

100 Years *of* Minding Mennonite Memory

Faith needs to provide new perspectives on history

Rich Preheim, director
Mennonite Church USA
Historical Committee

One lesson the Bible teaches is that life is a veritable hall of mirrors, that not everything is what it first appears. A young shepherd boy becomes a mighty king. Livestock greet the Messiah's arrival. Lowly fishermen and loathed tax collectors are transformed into influential religious leaders. A single lad's lunch feeds thousands. The church's greatest evangelist used to be one of its most fervent persecutors.

Accepting Jesus Christ should mean accepting such an upside-down-kingdom, first-shall-be-last perspective. But Christians, even those who profess pacifism, often put on blinders when it comes to history. We unquestionably accept common teachings such as American independence was only possible through revolution, war was necessary to abolish slavery and military engagement was necessary to stop Hitler.

Yet all those episodes are incongruous with the Prince of Peace's message. Believing the latter requires challenging the necessity of the former. "I'd argue that followers of Jesus should always have … suspicions of easy acceptance of war," says Ted Grimsrud, Bible and religion professor at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va., who is working on a book about World War II's moral legacy.

Fortunately, unlike creationism, **new historical perspectives can withstand scholastic scrutiny,** whether or not faith is invoked.

It isn't about making history fit faith or faith fit history. Rather it's about looking at both with the same perspective. If ours is the God of history, the two cannot be separated.

Fortunately, unlike creationism, new historical perspectives can withstand scholastic scrutiny, whether or not faith is invoked. James W. Loewen and Howard Zinn, for example, have become renowned – and reviled – for their academic, nonreligious alternative examinations of the past. Grimsrud, who says he is "not starting with his pacifism upfront," is finding that beneath the layers of patriotic fervor and myths accepted as facts are ample reasons to question the goodness of the "Good War." They range from the United States' complicity in escalating pre-war tensions with Japan to the dubious feasibility of a Nazi invasion of North America.

It's the historiographical equivalent of the Apostle Paul's exhortation, "Do not be conformed to this world." James C. Juhnke, history professor emeritus at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., and Carol M. Hunter, who teaches at Quaker-affiliated Earlham College in Richmond, Ind., wrote *The Missing Peace: the Search for Nonviolent Alternatives in United States History* to present the stories not found in textbooks. First published 10 years ago, the book includes accounts such as of the Native Americans who promoted peace and mediation centuries before the New World was "civilized" and of the Galloway Plan, which would have given the American colonies authority and autonomy they desired without bloodshed.

Certainly Juhnke, Hunter and Grimsrud can be called revisionists, a description that some would consider negative. But Christ was a revisionist. In Matthew's Beatitudes, Jesus declares six times that he had come to challenge conventional understandings: "You have heard it said … but I say … " (or comparable phrase). It's a theme that would be a hallmark of Christ's ministry.

Such revisionism is imperative. Visit just about any bookstore and see entire sections devoted to various wars and racks full of military history magazines. War and weapons are staples of TV's History Channel. Holidays such as Memorial Day, Veterans Day and Flag Day glorify power and nationalism. We've been told so often about the acceptability of violence to try to resolve conflict, it shouldn't be surprising if that's our first inclination. If that's going to change, we need to heed Juhnke and Hunter's admonition that "any new historical narrative must root itself in the mutuality and interdependence of all people."

That resonates with Scripture, which tells us that we're all supposed to live in peace and harmony. We can't do that if history says we can't.

100 Years *of* Minding Mennonite Memory

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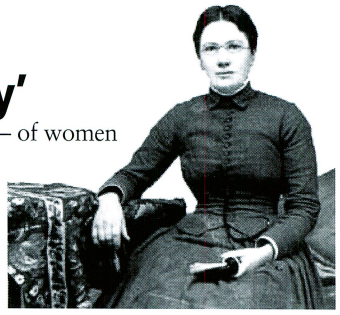

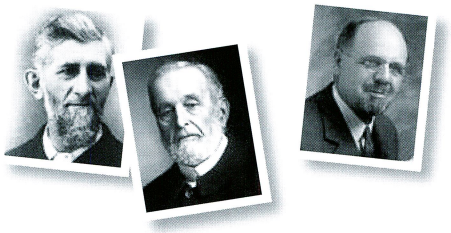

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Annals *News and notes from today and yesterday*

Mennonite Church USA Archives-North Newton

J.A. Oosterbaan of the Mennonite Theological Seminary in Amsterdam addresses the students and faculties of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries in Goshen, Ind., to open the 1962-63 school year. The Dutch seminary is observing its 275th anniversary in 2011.

From Menno Simons to seminary, Dutch Mennonites celebrate 'four-fold jubilee' of anniversaries in 2011

For Dutch Mennonites, 2011 is a year of celebrating not just one or two anniversaries but four. Menno Simons died 450 years ago, the Mennonite seminary in Amsterdam was founded 275 years ago; the Dutch conference; Algemene Doopsgezinde Societet (ADS), was organized 200 years ago; and the first woman pastor in the Netherlands was ordained 100 years ago. To commemorate, a yearlong "four-fold jubilee" is being held, including historical presentations, dramas, tours of Menno's hometown of Witmarsum, and a cycling tour to Bad Oldesloe, Germany, where he died in 1561. Many congregations are also sponsoring their own programs.

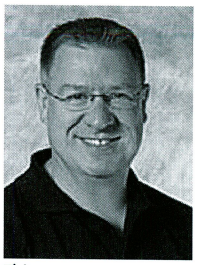
Menno was priest of his home parish when he left Catholicism to join the fledgling Anabaptist movement in 1536. He was soon called to be an elder and became so influential a leader that the group was named after him.

After years of churchwide discussions, the Amsterdam Mennonite Theological Seminary was started by one Amsterdam congregation, which provided financial support for one faculty member and scholarships for eight students. The impetus for the creation of the ADS in 1811 was to operate the seminary. The school became affiliated with the Free University of Amsterdam in 2003.

Anna Zernike, who studied at the Mennonite seminary, assumed the pulpit of the congregation at Bovenknijpe in 1911, becoming the second Mennonite woman in the world to be ordained and the first to lead a Mennonite congregation. Earlier that year, Ann Allebach was ordained at First Mennonite Church in Philadelphia for work in New York City but never pastored a Mennonite congregation. – *Mennonite World Conference Courier*

Online encyclopedia names new managing editor

Richard Thiessen has started as the new managing editor of the Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online (GAMEO), succeeding Sam Steiner of Waterloo, Ont., who has stepped down. Thiessen is library director at Columbia Bible College in Abbotsford, B.C.



Thiessen

GAMEO has also announced the addition of its first international consulting editors: Barbara Nkala from Zimbabwe, Gerhard Ratzlaff from Paraguay and Hans-Jurgen Goertz from Germany. They will review articles in their areas of expertise and recommend updates or rewrites.

TAKE FIVE

Five facts about the first edition of the *Martyrs Mirror* published in North America

1. The project, completed in 1749, kept 15 men busy for three years translating from the original Dutch into German, making the ink and paper, printing and binding.
2. The ink was made of chimney soot, flaxseed oil, oak galls and pokeberry juice.
3. The published book was 1,582 pages, the largest in colonial America.
4. Thirteen hundred copies were printed.
5. Dutch Mennonites had refused to undertake the project and advised Pennsylvania Mennonites to find a translator and have their young people copy the translation longhand.

Mennonite Church USA Archives, North Newton, Ks.

Martyrs Mirror illustration of the drowning of Anneken Jans, 1539.

Virginia went Confederate in Civil War, but state's Mennonites stayed Union

When the American Civil War broke out 150 years ago, Virginia Mennonites felt the pressures of loyalty bearing down on them. The state – the only one in the Confederacy with a Mennonite population – voted overwhelmingly to secede in the spring of 1861. But the Mennonites had a strong Union sentiment. Longtime Virginia Conference leader Samuel Shank declared that the United States was his government and that the Confederate States of America "was not a government at all but a rebellion."

Shank was one of a number of church members who did not vote in an attempt to mitigate the tensions. But other church members did cast ballots. Rockingham County hog farmer Isaac Wenger was building a barn and reportedly "marched all the hands he had at work on his barn and on his farm" to the polls to vote against secession. The loyalties of a George Brunk was apparently so well known that Confederate soldiers once brought him two wounded Union soldiers to take care of. Others voted for secession after receiving death threats. The *Rockingham Register* declared that only "demagogues and traitors" would note against secession. One of the reluctant voters was John Brunk, sexton at Weavers Mennonite Church at Harrisonburg, who had often helped fugitives escape to the north.

Wikimedia Commons

Illustration of Union soldiers entering the city of Winchester in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, 1862.

The only Virginia Mennonite bishop to vote for secession was Jacob Hildebrand of Waynesboro. His diary entry for June 13, 1861, reports that he led a day of fasting and prayer as called for by the president – not Abraham Lincoln but Jefferson Davis, who at the time was the Confederacy's provisional president. Later in the year, Hildebrand voted for Davis as permanent president and for legislator Samuel A. Coffman, a local slave-owner of Mennonite ancestry.

–Shenandoah Mennonite Historian

New Austrian museum highlights country's Anabaptist heritage

A 50-foot galley ship is aground in Austria. The ship, a recreation, was built to restore to public memory of 16th-century Hutterites condemned to galley service for their faith. It is part of a new museum on Anabaptism located in the Falkenstein castle in northeastern Austria.

"Many Austrians think that the free churches, the evangelicals, are American sects," said Reinhold Eichinger, chair of the organizing committee. "They have no idea that these are spiritual fruit of the Reformation period of this land." He was also instrumental in creating the Bund Evangeliker Gemeinden in Oesterrich, a fellowship of more than 50 congregations that resulted from Mennonite Brethren mission efforts starting in the 1960s.

The museum committee's members are all first-generation, rebaptized Austrians. The Falkenstein museum is the group's second in the country. The first opened in 2008 in Niederstulz, about half an hour northeast of Vienna, and has drawn 40,000 visitors.

The museum's opening celebration this summer included historical re-enactments and a song written by early church leader Hans Hut. Christoph Schoenborn, the Catholic archbishop of Vienna, sent a letter of greeting, noting the Anabaptists' willingness to give their lives for their faith and that the Roman Catholic Church was one of their oppressors. "May that injustice never happen again," Schoenborn wrote. – *Mennonite Weekly Review*

Mennonite Weekly Review

Visitors view a display in a new Anabaptist museum in the Falkenstein castle in northeastern Austria. The museum is the country's second on Anbaptist groups in the region.

The 2011 John Horsch Mennonite History Research Contest

WINNING ENTRIES


Norris


Gerig Meyer


Harder

This issue of *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* features excerpts from two of the winning entries in this year's John Horsch Mennonite History Research Contest, annually sponsored by the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee. "Preach in Your True Womanly Way" by **Mallori Norris** of Goshen (Ind.) College is from her first place paper in the college/university division, "Women in Ministry in the Missionary Church, 1873-Present." "From 'Marxism' to Market Wages" is excerpted from "Just Wages: Toward an Anabaptist Philosophy of Employee Compensation for Mennonite Institutions of High Learning" by **Jonny Gerig Meyer** of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., which was first in the seminary/graduate school division.

Other winners in the college/university division were **Jonathan Alan Miller** from Mary Baldwin College, Staunton, Va., who won second place for "The Origin of Anabaptist Tunes as Sun by the Old Order Amish and Hutterites" and Goshen student **Kelly Miller,** who finished third with "Behind Mennonite Same-Sex Sexuality Debates: Kathleen Temple and Virginia Mennonite Conference, 1998-2002."

In the seminary/graduate school division, **Glory Bautista** of Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, Calif., was second with her paper on "Menno Simons and Baptism," while **Brian Gumm** of Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., was third with "Brethren Beliefs and Practices: A Theological Notebook."

Hillary Harder of Wichita, Kan., was first in the high school division with "Pushing and Pulling: Causes of the Russian Mennonite Migration from South Russia to Kansas in the 1870s." **Jeff Yoder** of Elkhart was ranked second with "Civilian Public Service," and **Rhena South** of Memphis, Tenn., was third with "A Glimpse of the Lehman Family's Path from Switzerland to Missouri."

Judging this year's contest were Jean Kilheffer Hess of East Petersburg, Pa.; Gerlof Homan of Normal, Ill.; and Roger Juhnke of Newton, Kan.

The contest is named in honor of John Horsch, a writer and historian whose work helped to create an interest in Anabaptist history among North American Mennonites. He was born in Germany in 1867, and died in 1941 at Scottdale, Pa.

'Preach in your true womanly way'

One Mennonite group's acceptance – and later repudiation – of women in ministry

by Mallori Norris

Missionary Church Archives & Historical Collections

Janet Douglas in 1884 became the first woman credentialed for ministry by the Mennonite Brethren in Christ. During the next 70 years, more than 500 women would become ministers in the denomination

A huge surprise greeted Indiana-Michigan Conference minister Daniel Brenneman in late 1873 when returned to his Elkhart County, Ind., home from a trip to Ontario: the conference had excommunicated his friend and fellow minister John Krupp of Burr Oak, Mich., because, among other charges, he "allowed even women to testify."[1] The two men embraced the Holiness movement and its emotionalism, revival meetings and higher profile granted to women, all of which was a far cry from staid Mennonite conservatism. Brenneman wrote a friend that "some of us ministers became very discouraged and depressed at the slow progress the church was making, as a result of a general lack of spiritual energy."[2] Brenneman's progressivism and his support for Krupp resulted in his excommunication in April 1874.

The two men and their supporters soon joined with like-minded Ontario Mennonites to form the Reformed Mennonite Church[3] which, after a series of mergers with other small Anabaptist groups, became the Mennonite Brethren in Christ (MBC) in 1883. The next year, the new denomination credentialed Janet Douglas, an unmarried convert, as an evangelist and preacher, making the MBC the first Anabaptist group to approve a woman for ministry. It was one of the ways the MBC was dramatically different from Indiana-Michigan and the rest of the Mennonite Church. But the positions would be completely reversed barely a century later. In 1989, the Missionary Church would vote to discontinue its acceptance of women ministers, 16 years after the ordination of the first woman minister in the Mennonite Church.

The MBC had a complicated organizational history. In 1875, Brenneman, Krupp and the rest of the Reformed Mennonites merged with the Ontario-based New Mennonite Church of West Canada to become the United Mennonites. Six years later, the United Mennonites merged with the Evangelical Mennonite Society from Pennsylvania to become the United Evangelical Mennonites, who in 1883 combined with an Ohio Brethren in Christ faction to create the MBC. One theological thread tied these pieces together: all of the groups moving into the MBC were in some way influenced by Holiness teaching.

The Holiness movement began in the 19th century from the Wesleyan side of evangelical Protestantism. Its support of women in ministry was founded on several beliefs. One was the theology of perfection, rooted in Galatians 3:28, where Paul states, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."[4] The movement also emphasized being baptized by the Holy Spirit.[5] If the Spirit leads a woman to testify and preach, who are humans to stop it? Anyone who professed to be moved to preach was asked several questions to verify the Spirit's presence that person.[6] If her or his answers were deemed satisfactory, that person was given permission to preach.

Also cited was Joel 2:28-29: "I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days." God gave both men and women the Holy Spirit and now all could prophesy. To further the argument favoring women in ministry, Holiness advocates noted many examples in the Bible, such as Deborah, a judge; Anna, a prophetess; and Priscilla, a fellow worker to Paul. The MBC adopted these views and approved an amendment to its denominational constitution permitting women, "chosen of God, to preach and to labor for the salvation of souls, under the supervision of a minister or presiding elder." [8]

In 1883, two years after her conversion, MBC member Janet Douglas "received a definite call to preach."[9] For a year she had been holding children's meetings and helping a Holiness evangelist in his work. When asked in 1883 to hold a revival meeting, Douglas agreed even though she barely knew how to preach. Her services were mainly testimonies with 10- to 12-minute sermons, and many converted to Christianity as a result.[10] In March 1884, in light of "her good moral character and devotions to the cause of Christ, and of her efficiency as a coworker in the vineyard of the Lord," Douglas was licensed by the MBC Michigan conference.[11] She felt God's calling to work in Grand Rapids, Mich., where she visited people and preached among them until a group of believers formed. A year later, the denomination recognized her as their first "mission worker." [12]

In the years after 1883, more and more women – eventually several hundred – became involved in preaching and testifying.[13] Soon to follow Douglas' lead in ministry were Mary Ann Hallman, an 18-year old from Ontario, and two women from Indiana, Katie Hygema and Mary Nunemaker, who all started in 1884 to preach and perform mission work in the United States and Canada.

Missionary Church Archives & Historical Collections

John Krupp, minister at Burr Oak, Mich., was expelled from Indiana-Michigan Conference in 1873 for allowing "women to testify," among other charges.

Many MBC women became city mission workers, answering the call for "[t]wo or three blood and fire sisters…to go out for God."[14] From 1895 to 1920, more than 200 women helped start more than 180 congregations.[15] The women would rent a store or empty hall and every night hold a revival meeting there. They also "visited the sick, comforted the distressed, took food to the poor and lonely, offered the Bread of Life to the rich and lonely, fasted and prayed and fasted and prayed – often because there was no food in the house to allow them to do otherwise." The women entered the bars and saloons and handed out the church magazine and preached the Good News. No formal training was required. Even so, these women touched hundreds of people with their messages. One female preacher instructed her sister preachers to "Preach and tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth … [and] in your true womanly way … give out heart truth, and it will reach hearts."[17]

Once a congregation was planted and well-established, the district conference often sent a man to take the city mission workers' places even though "[t]he men were not always better preachers than the women." As of 1958, approximately one out of every eight churches in the MBC was founded by a female preacher.[19]

In the MBC periodical *Gospel Banner,* many writers, male and female, leaders and lay members, wrote articles in defense of women's ministry. Articles expounded on the many women in the Bible who were held in high regard and/or held positions of leadership. In an 1883 letter from one reader, he or she pointed out that preachers create sermons from the words of Anna, Elizabeth and Mary, yet if those women were present in today's church, they would not be able to preach. About Mary, the author declared, "Her words become gospel when recorded in the Book, but her voice must not be heard in our meetings!"[20] The author continued on to point out how women pray for their children but cannot speak in church, compose hymns sung in church but cannot say the same thing in church,[21] and are allowed to teach others in Sunday school but cannot teach at the front of the church. The *Gospel Banner* also reprinted articles from other church publications, especially those of Holiness churches, that championed women's leadership and gave examples of women ministers in other denominations.

From 1895 to 1920, more than **200 women helped start more than 180 congregations.** The women would rent a store or empty hall and every night hold a revival meeting there.

Nevertheless, women, while granted ministerial recognition, were refused equal rights as preachers with their male counterparts. The MBC's 1888 constitution stated, "They [women] shall be received… except ordination."[22] Most opposition came from people from traditional Mennonite

backgrounds, a group that did not support women's ministry. Women were not allowed to speak during worship services and many Mennonite leaders refused to permit Sunday schools partly to prevent women from teaching classes.[25] In the end, a compromise was made concerning MBC women's ministry that favored the view that men and women, while similar, are still quite different.[26]

As evangelists and missionaries, women had a voice in MBC conferences. If they desired, they could participate in the same process as male candidates for ordination. But in place of official ordination, the MBC in 1905 began giving women the title "approved ministering sister."[27] So the women met the same requirements as men but did not receive the same recognition.[28]

Over the next 70 years, more than 500 ministering sisters held revival services, preached in camp meetings, planted churches, baptized new believers, started inner-city missions, engaged in street ministries, cared for orphans, ministered as senior pastors, served as traveling evangelists, became faculty members who prepared others for ministry and did pioneer work overseas as missionaries.[29] Some women were credentialed to work alongside their ordained husbands. This sometimes allowed them greater freedom and the opportunity to enter church leadership, as they were sometimes asked to pastor their husband's congregation if he was ill or had died.[30]

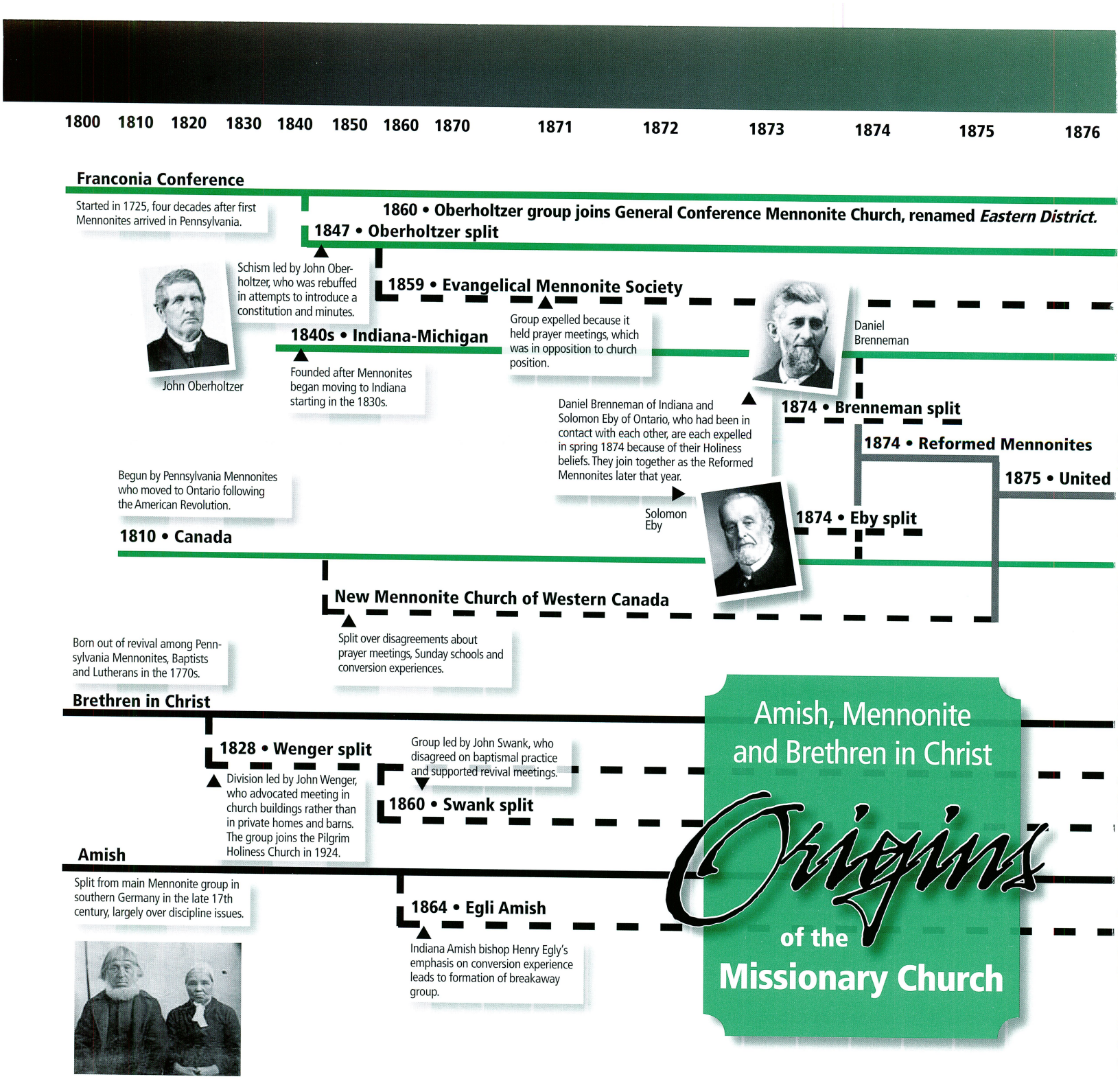
Interestingly, many writers for the *Gospel Banner* considered women as morally superior to men even though they were denied official ordination. During the early decades of the 20th century, temperance was a frequent subject, and writers expounded on the sinfulness of alcohol and its negative effects on men and their families. Women were seen as purer than because of their opposition to alcohol. One author satirically wote that "while the weak-minded woman takes a cup of tea, the strong-minded man takes a glass of whiskey…[and] spends his evening at the rum shop or billiard saloon." The author claimed that women make up more than two-thirds of church membership while 90 percent of the convicts in penitentiaries across the country are men.[31] Thus, some writers argued, women should be given the right to vote, which they would then use to support Prohibition, bringing humans back to a place of morality in public life.

Missionary Church Archives & Historical Collections

A group of Mennonite Brethren in Christ "ministering sisters" in Ohio, circa 1905. By 1958, approximately one of every eight congregations in the denomination was founded by women.

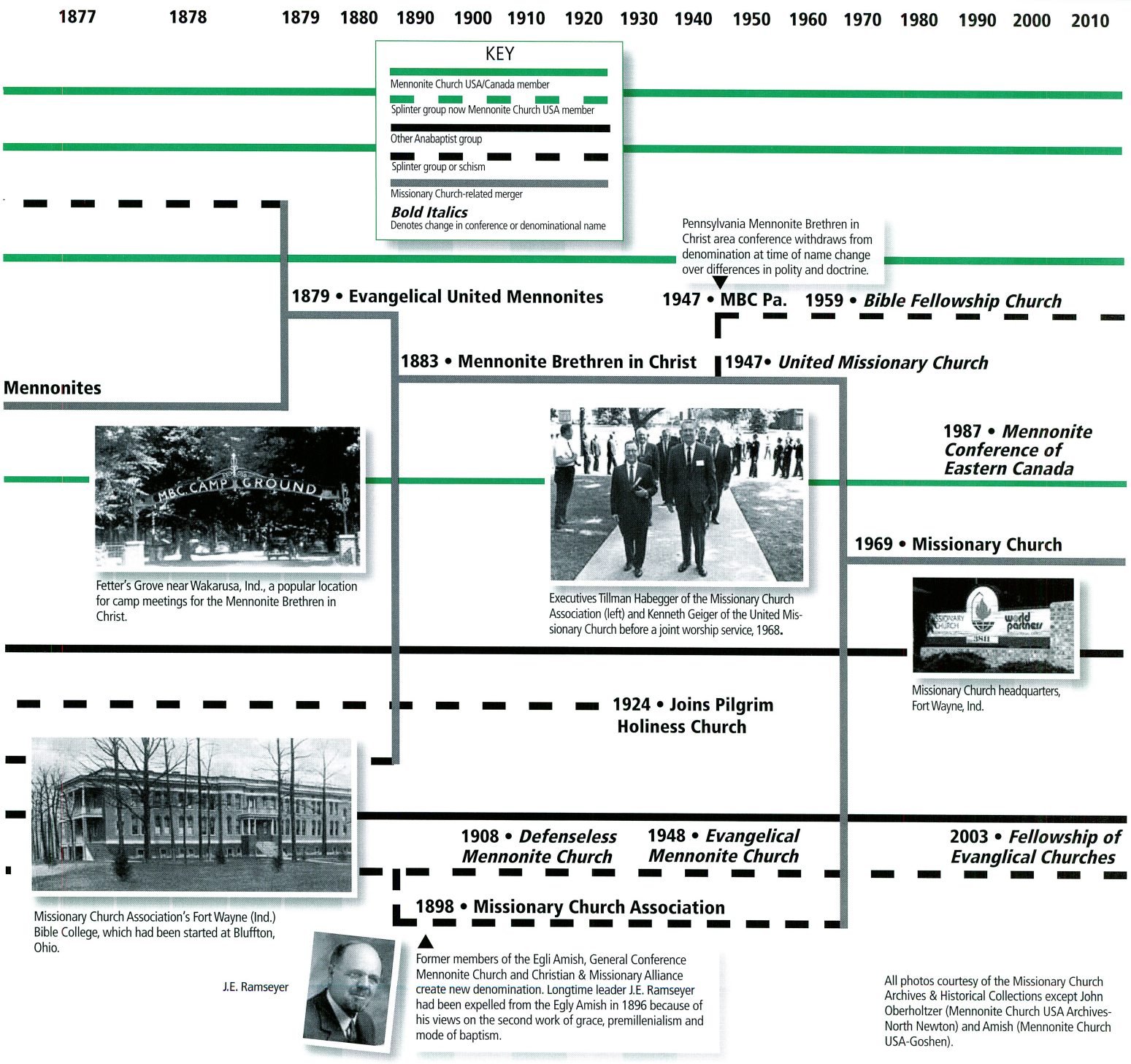
'God is Sovereign. He is greater than custom or even laws. If He cannot find a man who is qualified and useable, **He will not hesitate to call and empower a woman,** and therefore when He does call and equip a woman for a special mission, we must withhold censure and criticism lest we be found in conflict with Him Who called her.'

Having drawn on wider Holiness arguments in favor of women's ministry, the MBC would become influenced by wider evangelical arguments regarding women's public leadership in the church. Some Protestant groups wanted to adapt the Christian faith to modern culture and used biblical criticism to support their claims of finding "myths, legends, and historical errors in place of supernatural events."[32] They supported the idea of evolution, Jesus as a martyr instead of a substitute for sin and man's justification by works, and also rejected the virgin birth and Jesus as the Son of God.[33] This movement eventually became known as Modernism. To counter its ideas, traditionalists joined both the Calvinist and Holiness wings of American Protestantism to write *The Fundamentals*, a set of booklets defending the basics of Christian faith that Modernism was trying to change.[34] The Fundamentalists' goal was "to purge the major churches of error" and lend "the entire movement an air of … piety and zeal."[35] Fundamentalists used the notion of biblical inerrancy to support their view and counter Modernist attacks on the Bible.



One concept that Modernists supported was women's rights, including the right to hold positions of leadership in the church. Fundamentalists struggled against the idea, partly because it was associated with the Modernist movement. The Fundamentalists also re-evaluated their ideas concerning women's ministry because of a desire to follow a more literal reading of the Bible. To deny women leadership roles in ministry, they used 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-14 and focused on the fact that Eve was the first to be deceived and through her Adam was deceived. Some Fundamentalists even went so far as to believe that "[m]ost all errors originate with women."[36] Since the MBC had encouraged strong ties with broader American evangelicalism, Fundamentalist ideas soon gained a hearing in the MBC congregations.

During the MBC's first 50 years, an average of nine women annually entered the ministry.[37] But the question of women's role in the church became a growing concern. As suffragists demanded the right to vote, the desire for women's rights transferred to the pulpit. Many women who became



Fetter's Grove near Wakarusa, Ind., a popular location for camp meetings for the Mennonite Brethren in Christ.

Executives Tillman Habegger of the Missionary Church Association (left) and Kenneth Geiger of the United Missionary Church before a joint worship service, 1968.

Missionary Church headquarters, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Missionary Church Association's Fort Wayne (Ind.) Bible College, which had been started at Bluffton, Ohio.

All photos courtesy of the Missionary Church Archives & Historical Collections except John Oberholtzer (Mennonite Church USA Archives-North Newton) and Amish (Mennonite Church USA-Goshen).

preachers began their careers as abolitionists, suffragists or prohibitionists. They used the pulpit to push for social change and, eventually, a growing number of evangelical churches could claim that "the first woman to preach from [their] pulpit was a temperance or suffrage worker."[38]

By the 1930s, there was a visible decline in the number of *Gospel Banner* articles concerning women's ministry. After the passage of the 19th amendment in 1920, granting women the right to vote, the secular feminist movement was less vocal. Participants "lost the momentum to speak out" for others "as they had in support of temperance and suffrage."[39] There were still some people, though, who supported women ministers, such as one *Gospel Banner* writer who stated that one female preacher he listened to evidenced godlikeness, heavenly mindedness and intimate fellowship with God.[40] One minister joked that he never asked his wife to preach because if he did, "the people would never come back to hear me."[41] Another writer declared: "God is Sovereign. He is greater than custom or even laws. If He cannot find a man who is

qualified and useable, He will not hesitate to call and empower a woman, and therefore when He does call and equip a woman for a special mission, we must withhold censure and criticism lest we be found in conflict with Him Who called her."[42]

In the 1920s through the 1940s, a growing number of *Gospel Banner* articles were pleas to women to take care of their appearance. Church members were concerned that many young women were wearing clothing that was provocative and not fitting for a pious woman. "Painting" of the face was associated with prostitutes and immorality. The concern with modesty was a throwback to the MBC's conservative Mennonite roots as well as the beginning of the denomination's growing attraction to Fundamentalism.

Until the 1940s, the MBC retained its heritage as an Anabaptist peace church

Missionary Church Archives & Historical Collections

Mennonite Brethren in Christ "ministering sisters" – and two unidentified men – in Ohio, circa 1910. While women had more opportunities to serve in the MBC than in other Mennonite groups, they still couldn't be ordained like men.

The concern with modesty was a throwback to the **MBC's conservative Mennonite roots**, as well as the beginning of the denomination's growing attraction to Fundamentalism.

and identified with the circle of Mennonite-related denominations. During the Spanish-American War in 1898, however, MBC members began justifying wars as an opportunity to spread the message of Christ. Through American expansionism, mission fields were opened that were previously unreachable.[43]

For the most part, though, the MBC retained its loyalty to the doctrine of nonresistance. During World War I, many MBC young men were persecuted and imprisoned for their refusal to fight.[44] Articles filled the *Gospel Banner* from readers who supported the church's peace stance. In response to the news that the United States wanted to instate a "real army" to replace the National Guard, church leaders called for the government to relinquish the idea.[45] A week later, the magazine featured a petition to President Woodrow Wilson and Congress from the All-Mennonite Convention, a U.S. inter-Mennonite assembly that met in Carlock, Ill., in 1916, stating that they "continue firm in the conviction … that all war is wrong" and asking that in case a law requiring military training for young males is passed, "the conscientious scruples of those non-resistant denominations … should be given the same gracious consideration as has always been given them."[46]

With the coming of World War II, however, MBC views started to change, and more MBC men participated in the war instead of choosing Civilian Public Service. About 79 percent of MBC young men registered as available for regular military service while only 17 percent picked noncombatant military service and just 4.8 percent asked for alternative service.[47] This is in great contrast with the rest of the Mennonite and Amish churches. When MBC men who served as combatants returned home, their congregations readily accepted them back, and many took advantage of the GI Bill and obtained schooling for the ministry. Very soon "the pulpits were filled with veterans."[48] By 1955, the church officially decided to allow individuals to make their own decision regarding whether or not war is acceptable and if one should serve in the military.[49]

In 1947, the MBC decided to drop the name "Mennonite" from their denominational name and become the United Missionary Church (UMC). When the MBC was originally named in 1883, there were discussions of whether or not to have "Mennonite" in the name. It was finally resolved to keep it in the denomination's

name because "certain exemptions from military service hinged upon their having the word 'Mennonite' definitely in the name." In 1947,[50] there were no longer the same concerns about military exemptions.

A growing identity with missions also influenced the name change. The new name came from the church's overseas program, called the "United Missionary Society."[51] There was a desire to reach out to and appeal more to outsiders and lessen associations with Mennonite ethnicity. This led to more inclusive dress, language, prayer style and worship in the renamed denomination.[52] There were also those members who had left Mennonite or Amish churches and preferred to distance themselves from their Anabaptist background. Finally, many in the western districts simply did not feel connected to or similar with the Mennonites in their areas.

As the church's identity changed, the UMC moved to reduce opportunities for female preachers by amending its constitution in 1952 to state that women would not be allowed to "administer the ordinances, officiate at marriage ceremonies, nor be eligible to appointment or election to the General Board of the denomination or the administrative boards of the church nor to the District Superintendency."[53] This move aligned the UMC, which had joined the National Association of Evangelicals in 1952, with what was becoming the wider evangelical stance. At the same time that the UMC was limiting the rights of women preachers, mainline denominations began formally ordaining women in the 1950s.[54]

UMC women's interest in ministry and ordination was gradually waning as women focused more on their roles as wives and mothers. Their opportunities for education at Bible schools continued to decrease as more institutions limited the number of women accepted or even refused to accept women. The number of women licensed and approved in the church declined. Churches wanted seminary-trained pastors, and many seminaries refused women entrance or, if they accepted women, the faculty attempted to dissuade them from being pastors, instead leading them into other kinds of ministry.[55] By 1969, when the UMC merged with the Missionary Church Association to create the Missionary Church, the only signs of the MBC's history of women in ministry existed in death notices stating that the woman was a retired ministering sister or had worked in some other ministerial capacity earlier in her life.[56]

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'Preach in your true womanly way': endnotes

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Mennonite Church USA Archives-North Newton

Jessie Ziegler of the Church of the Brethren's Bethany Biblical Seminary in Chicago, speaks at Freeman (S.D.) Junior College, circa 1948. During this time, FJC policy dictated that married male faculty members be paid more than women and single teachers.

From 'Marxism' to market wages

The development of faculty compensation at Mennonite colleges

by Jonny Gerig Meyer

In the first half of the 20th century, employment at institutions of higher education affiliated with what is now Mennonite Church USA was often viewed as a form of service for the church. Many faculty members likely could have commanded much higher salaries at non-Mennonite schools. Therefore, the decision to work at a Mennonite school often reflected a substantial commitment to the mission of that school and some amount of personal sacrifice in terms of financial compensation.[1] "The philosophy of remuneration of workers in Mennonite Church institutions in the past has been that of the living allowance," Carl Kreider, dean of Goshen (Ind.) College from 1944 to 1970, observed in 1967. "Theoretically at least there was no attempt to relate the compensation to the market rate of pay."[2] One proposed salary scale at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., stated plainly: "The minimum wage is intended to be high enough to provide a living wage for every staff and faculty member. The maximum is intended to be high enough to invite able men and women to consider teaching in Bethel College as a life work, while yet not being so high as to preclude a reasonable element of sacrifice as compared with State schools."[3]

Bethel was twice denied accreditation by the North Central Association (NCA), and both times one of the primary reasons was the college's "pitifully low salaries."[4] When accreditation was finally approved in 1938, faculty salaries at the college were still around the 20th percentile of NCA institutions.[5] In 1945-46, the average full professor at Bethel was paid $2,120 ($25,759 in 2010 dollars), approximately 75 percent of the average of $2,810 ($34,143) at seven other church-related colleges in Kansas.[6] The 1947-48 average for Bethel professors increased to $2,750 ($26,971), but was still significantly lower than the averages of either state universities ($5,249 [$51,480]) or private colleges ($4,242 [$41,604]).[7] Salaries were usually slightly higher at the other Mennonite colleges. (See Table 1.)[8]

All of the salary scales for faculty and administrators were relatively "compressed" (i.e., the ratio between higher-paid and lower-paid employees was rather small), both within faculty ranks and between administrators, including the president, and teaching faculty. This reflected, at least in part, a desire to "decrease rather than increase disparity of wealth in our brotherhood, recognizing the responsibility of each member for the welfare of the household of faith."[10] At Bethel, a proposed salary schedule stated the president's salary should be 20 percent higher than the faculty scale,[11] the dean should receive a 10 percent increase,

and the dean of women and dean of men should be paid 5 percent more than the scale. These guidelines were apparently not followed consistently, however. In 1945-46, for instance, the president's salary was more than 40 percent higher than the average salary for full professors.[12] This ratio decreased to 1.17:1 by 1961-62, and then increased again to 1.42:1 by 1971-72.[13] The salary ratio between professors and instructors was similar in the 1940s (1.39:1 in 1945-46), decreased significantly in the 1950s (to 1.13:1 in 1960-61) and increased again to 1.56:1 by 1974-75.[14] The ratios at Bethel in the 1940s were similar to those at non-Mennonite church-related colleges in the area. A 1945-46 survey of seven such colleges revealed an average president-to-professor ratio of 1.46:1, and an average professor-to-instructor ratio of 1.37:1.[15]

A study from the mid-1950s concluded that the average ratio between the highest-paid employee other than the president, often an assistant to the president or academic dean, and the lowest-paid employee, such as secretarial staff, was 2.1:1 at the General Conference Mennonite Church-affiliated colleges (Bethel, Bluffton [Ohio] University and Freeman [S.D.] Junior College [FJC]); 3:1 at the Mennonite Church schools (Goshen, Eastern Mennonite University [EMU], Harrisonburg, Va., and Hesston [Kan.] College) and the Mennonite Brethren's Tabor College in Hillsboro, Kan.; 3.3:1 at a selection of non-Mennonite colleges; and 2.3:1 at a selection of seminaries, including the General Conference Mennonite Church seminary in Chicago.[16] A study of 233 colleges and universities conducted by the Central Association of College and University Business Officers reported an average ratio of 4:1 at state universities and 3.1:1 at private colleges and universities. These ratios increased significantly over the course of the 20th century.[17]

Many of the early salary structures took into consideration some aspects of "employee need." This meant that salaries could differ based on gender, family size, age of children, whether the employee had a wife and her employment situation. It was assumed that married women were financially supported by their husbands, thus their salaries did not vary according to family circumstances. Kreider called the system "pure Marxism – 'From each according to his ability; to each according to his need.' "[18] Goshen's policy in 1950 stated, "Salary to the faculty shall be according to academic training and rank with provisions for adjustment on the basis of supplementary training, extra service or special need such as sickness, size of family, etc." Employees were given "an allowance of $50 per year [$454 in 2010 dollars] for each child between the ages of 5 and 15."[19] At Bethel, employees received "$100 for each dependent (wife included), not to exceed a total of $300."[20] The FJC policy clarified that a male married employee would not receive a dependency allowance for his wife if she worked half-time or more at the college or was fully employed elsewhere.[21] EMU, Hesston and Bluffton also provided "dependency allowances" for employees with children or spouses.[22] Some other Christian schools provided dependency allowances, but public universities usually did not.[23] In addition to these allowances, children of employees were granted tuition discounts at the same college, often between 50 percent and 100 percent of full tuition.[24] This also was not unique to Mennonite schools.[25]

> But as many Mennonites **became more concerned with individual justice and treating employees impartially and equitably**, the question of how to faithfully determine compensation for employees of church institutions increased in complexity

Need-based considerations were motivated by well-intentioned goals of community, good stewardship of financial resources, resistance to personal greed and the biblical examples of Acts 2:44-45[26] and Acts 4:32-37.[27] Still, some faculty members began to raise questions about the assumptions of needs-based compensation. In the late 1920s, Goshen English professor Olive Wyse, who was single, privately questioned why a young single male instructor was paid more than she was, despite having no additional family "need" and less experience, education and teaching responsibility. After

Table 1: Average Salaries, 1945–46

(figures in parentheses are adjusted to 2010 dollars)

	Goshen	Bethel	Bluffton
President	$2,645 ($32,138)	$3,000 ($36,452)	$2,634 ($32,005)
Dean	$2,645 ($32,138)	$2,500 ($30,377)	$2,602 ($31,616)
Professor	$2,308 ($28,044)	$2,120 ($25,759)	$2,319 ($28,177)
Associate Professor	N/A	$2,000 ($24,301)	$2,192 ($26,634)
Assistant Professor	$1,986 ($24,131)	$1,707 ($20,741)	$2,020 ($24,544)
Instructor	$1,428 ($17,351)	$1,525 ($18,530)	$1,686 ($20,486)
Ratio: President to Professor	1.15:1	1.42:1	1.14:1
Ratio: Professor to Instructor	1.62:1	1.39:1	1.38:1

recommending to college president Ernest E. Miller that he should ensure "equal pay for equal work for students and a more equitable pay scale for the faculty," Wyse met with the executive committee of the Mennonite Church's Mennonite Board of Education to present her view: "If I were an employer I could not pay two people who did the same work equally well a different salary because one was a man and the other a woman."[28]

The situation for women employees improved slightly in the 1940s, and by 1950 the faculty salary scale at Goshen was modified. Instead of simply paying women less than men, it now lowered the salaries of all women and unmarried men.[29] Gender discrimination was perhaps lessened, but nonetheless remained. FJC articulated one reason for this approach: "Should a married man fulfilling only the above basic requirements receive more salary than a single man or woman? We believe he should for the following reasons. Such a person is more dependable and stable; in addition, his wife might in an indirect way be of service to the school. A married person has additional home responsibilities."[30] Many of these assumptions continued throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Goshen's dependency allowance for both spouses and children was expanded to include parents in 1962, reverted back to only including spouses and children in 1970, was reduced to only children in 1971 and disappeared altogether in 1973.[31]

In the middle of the 20th century, Mennonites gradually shifted from being a largely rural and isolated community to an increasingly urbanized and socially engaged people in active pursuit of peace and justice. This brought about changes in the focus and makeup of Mennonite institutions as well.[32] An influential development – informed, at least in part, by similar changes in the broader American society – was an increasing conviction that church employees should not be treated primarily as service workers expected to make significant personal sacrifices. Rather, they deserve to be compensated justly and equitably in exchange for their services. This shift in outlook was accompanied by a new emphasis on equity (understood as a sense of "fairness," or a deliberate and clear relationship between wages and the work performed), both internally (within institutions) and externally (among institutions).[33] At Mennonite institutions of higher education, these developments translated into growing concerns in the 1950s and 1960s that salaries were too low – sometimes even in comparison with those of nearby Mennonite pastors[34] – and that the earlier salary scales were not being followed, resulting in unwanted disparities among faculty members of similar rank and experience.

Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen

Goshen (Ind.) College professor Olive Wyse, visiting with a student in 1958, challenged the school's policy of paying women instructors less than their male counterparts

> This reflected the growing sense that church workers were too **often expected to make significant financial sacrifices,** whereas church members working in secular organizations were not expected to make similar sacrifices.

At many of the schools, low salaries were partially offset by generous fringe benefits. At Goshen in the 1970s, this included full lifetime and family health coverage, 10 percent contributions to employee retirement plans, substantial tuition discounts for spouses and children of employees, and occasionally time off and even tuition assistance for graduate studies.[35] Most of the schools also established "mutual aid funds" through employee contributions, to be drawn upon by any employee with unexpected financial needs. Benefits were not identical at the other schools, but were relatively generous at all of the Mennonite institutions of higher education.[36] A 1959 Mennonite Church (MC) report anticipated later developments: "It would seem that as allowances or salaries become more adequate, the fringe benefits, inasmuch as they are thought of as compensation for inadequate pay, can grow less."[37]

Salaries were often set on an individual basis by school administrators, who could offer more or less than the scale demanded if they chose to do so.[38] Variations from the standard pay scales had existed for a long

time – some disparity was built into the earlier "needs-based" structure by definition – but as the awareness of apparently arbitrary salary disparities (i.e., differences in salary not easily explained away by differing levels of "need") grew, there was also a growing sense among employees that compensation should be commensurate with the contribution of the employee, not a subjective assessment of financial need. Wyse had raised these issues in the 1930s and '40s at Goshen, and they were issues increasingly being discussed in broader society, with the growth of the feminist movement and the passage of the Equal Pay Act in 1963.

These new developments did not replace earlier values of caring for one another's needs, resisting individualism and greed, or ensuring that business practices correspond with biblical themes and Christian ethics. But as many Mennonites became more concerned with individual justice and treating employees impartially and equitably, the question of how to faithfully determine compensation for employees of church institutions increased in complexity and led the church to undertake several attempts to develop principles for the remuneration of its workers. In 1951, a paper presented at a "Study Conference on Christian Community Relations," sponsored by the MC Committee on Industrial Relations, used biblical examples to argue, "Justice and equity should always be guiding principles in the program of an employer. These principles would make him pay a wage commensurate to the service rendered."[39] Another paper noted that assessing the financial value of an employee's service was no easy task: "[G]oing wage rates are determined to a large extent by supply and demand with very little relation, if any, to what might be equity and even less to the application of the Christian ethic." The author proposed, "A formula combining 'market value', 'family need' and 'employer ability' might be helpful in giving some direction."[40]

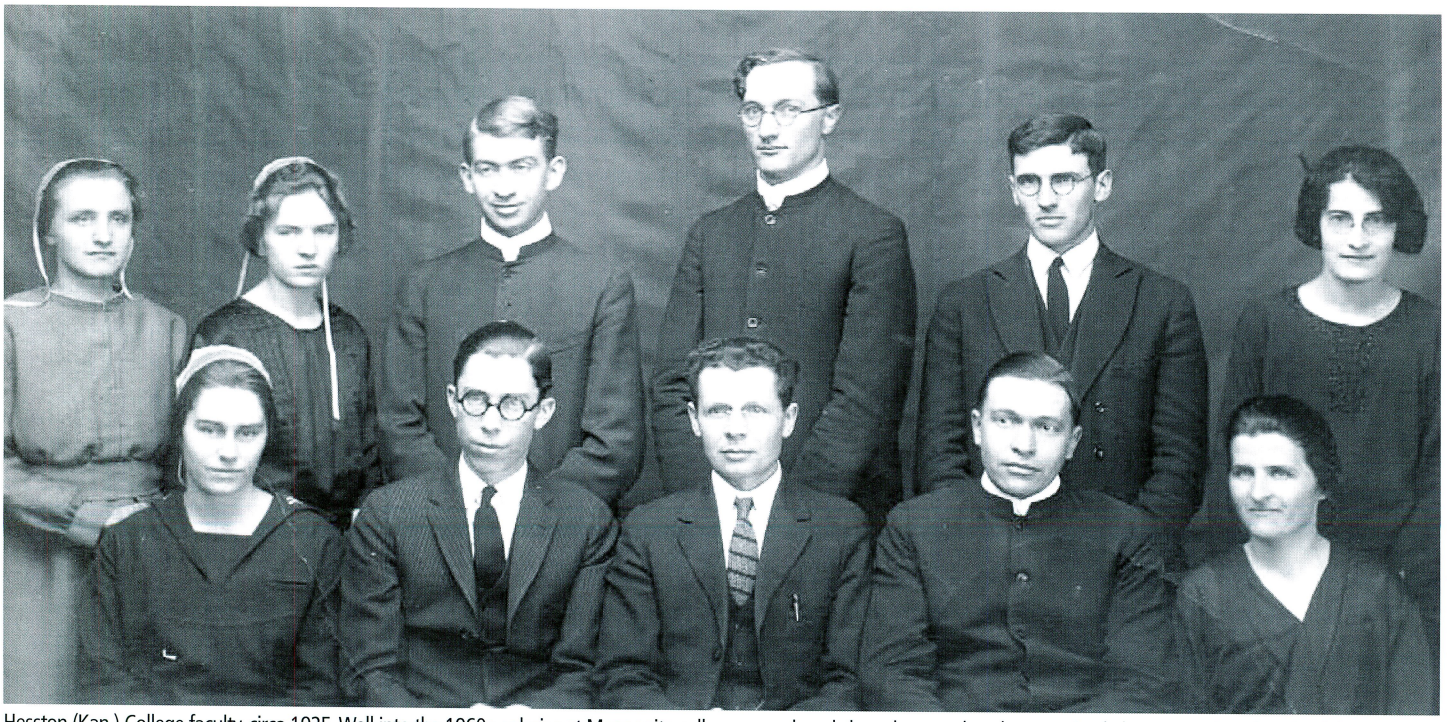
Mennonite Church USA Archives-North Newton

J. Winfield Fretz, acting president of Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., performs in a campus faculty skit in 1960. Before becoming the first Mennonite college to earn accreditation 22 years earlier, Bethel had been twice denied before in large part because of its low salaries.

In 1957, the General Conference Mennonite Church (GCMC) appointed a committee to "consider the General Conference salary schedule," paying particular attention to the compensation of denominational staff at the GCMC offices in Newton, Kansas. The denomination created a detailed salary structure that was in many ways similar to the earlier structures used at the colleges, including a monthly allowance for "family responsibilities" (defined as "being married and head of a household or having comparable responsibilities").[41] One notable difference, however, was the explicit rejection of any built-in gender discrimination, reflecting the influence of increasing discussions of gender equality in both the church and broader society.

Similar attempts to articulate a philosophy of compensation took place in the Mennonite Church as well. In 1959, the Committee on Coordination of Church Program conducted a two-day "Conference on Church Personnel" to "examine employee policies, salary arrangements, retirement programs and any related concerns."[42] First proposed was a statement on a Christian standard of living: "To apply the principles of Scripture today, and in recognition of the fact that the Church of Christ is a brotherhood, there ought to be basically one Christian standard of living for all members. Church workers and other members should live on the same level. There should not be two standards."[43] This reflected the growing sense that church workers were too often expected to make significant financial sacrifices, whereas church members working in secular organizations were not expected to make similar sacrifices. It was not a rejection of Christian sacrifice altogether, but the committee was in agreement that it should be limited: "All must live on a sacrificial basis, but without coercion. … The church no longer accepts the idea that church workers must do the major sacrificing."[44]

Both the 1957 GCMC and 1959 MC reports were attempts to articulate a philosophy of compensation that was both just and equitable in not taking advantage of church workers, yet did not accommodate individualism or materialism nor abandon traditional Mennonite values of community and caring for one another.



Mennonite Church USA Archives-Goshen

Hesston (Kan.) College faculty, circa 1925. Well into the 1960s, salaries at Mennonite colleges were largely based on need, real or perceived, than on work and credentials.

Accreditation and growing professionalism of the Mennonite schools and faculties was a related development. Employees, along with the institutions themselves, were increasingly externally focused and less insulated from the outside world. For instance, only three Bethel faculty members in 1932-33, held doctorates.[45] At the time, the NCA's preference was that at least department heads should have doctorates.[46] By the time Bethel achieved NCA accreditation in 1938, the college was around the 80th percentile of NCA member schools in percentage of faculty members with doctorates.[47] Similar trends could be found at the other Mennonite schools, as the pursuit of accreditation led to higher expectations in regard to faculty credentials.[48] This not only meant that more faculty members were taking on greater debt and giving up more years of otherwise potential earnings to pursue advanced degrees but also that faculty were increasingly being trained in non-Mennonite settings. New faculty understandably assumed positions at Mennonite institutions of higher education with expectations about compensation increasingly shaped by the values of the broader society.[49]

Meanwhile, Mennonite candidates were becoming more attractive to non-Mennonite institutions as well. It could no longer be assumed that the brightest and best of the Mennonite students would return from graduate studies to teach at Mennonite schools.[50] This also reflected the fact that faculty members began to view their work more in terms of a professional career in which employees should be compensated adequately for their contributions in addition to a service to the church. In order to continue attracting qualified faculty members, the Mennonite schools felt it necessary to begin comparing salaries more formally with other non-Mennonite schools as well.[51]

This growing external focus – accelerated in part by regional accreditation and the professionalization of Mennonite academics – represented an important shift in Mennonite approaches to compensation, as the institutions felt pressured to respond more directly to market rates.[52]

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From 'Marxism' to market wages: endnotes

1 These sentiments were expressed in nearly all of the personal interviews conducted with current and former faculty and administrators.

2 Carl Kreider, "A Philosophy of Staff Remuneration in Church Institutions" (paper presented at the Association of Mennonite Hospitals and Homes meeting, Chicago, IL, Jan. 25, 1967), 1.

3 "Section I: Proposed Salary Schedule for Bethel College," in "176: Faculty Salary Studies," E. G. Kaufman (MLA.III.1.A.1.g), Mennonite Church USA Archives, North Newton, KS (hereafter MCUSA Archives-North Newton).

4 Peter J. Wedel, *The Story of Bethel College*, ed. Edmund G. Kaufman (North Newton, KS: Mennonite Press, 1954), 456. When Goshen College received NCA accreditation in 1941, the organization noted that salaries at Goshen were below market rates, but recognized some of the differential as "contributed services in much the same way as the priests and nuns in Catholic orders contributed to Roman Catholic institutions." See Kreider, "A Philosophy of Staff Remuneration," 2.

5 Wedel, *The Story of Bethel College*, 457.

6 Throughout this paper, monetary figures in parentheses are adjusted for inflation to reflect the purchasing power in 2010 dollars. Calculations use the yearly averages from the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers. U.S. Department Of Labor: Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Consumer Price Index: All Urban Consumers (CPI-U)," 2010, ftp://ftp.bls.gov/pub/special.requests/cpi/cpiai.txt.

7 For the sake of comparison, the Newton (KS) city manager was paid $4,656 ($42,254 in 2010 dollars) in 1948. For Bethel figures, see "Salaries Pd. 1947-48." For comparative institution figures, see "Annual Salaries of Academic Staffs in 233 Colleges and Universities, 1947-48" report prepared by the Central Association of College and University Business Officers. For Newton city employee salaries, see "Fixing Salaries for City Employees and Working Conditions for Such Employees," clipping from 1948 Newton newspaper. All documents are in "608: Salary Scale, Comparative Study of Faculty Salaries in Church Colleges," E. G. Kaufman (MLA. III.1.A.1.g), MCUSA Archives-North Newton.

8 "Comparative Study of Faculty Salaries in Church Colleges, 1945-46," in "608: Salary Scale, Comparative Study of Faculty Salaries in Church Colleges," E. G. Kaufman (MLA.III.1.A.1.g), MCUSA Archives-North-Newton.

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10 "Report of the Study Conference on Christian Community Relations held at Laurelville Mennonite Camp, July 24–27, 1951," 10, in "Minutes and Reports, 1949-1959," Mennonite Church Committee on Economic and Social Relations, 1939-1973 (I-3-7, Box 3, File 45), Mennonite Church USA Archives, Goshen, IN. (hereafter MCUSA Archives-Goshen).

11 "Section I: Proposed Salary Schedule for Bethel College," in "176: Faculty Salary Studies," E. G. Kaufman (MLA.III.1.A.1.g), MCUSA Archives-North Newton.

12 The 1945-46 salaries were paid on an 11-month basis for both faculty and administrators, while the 1946-47 salaries were extended to 12 months for faculty and administrators. "Study of Faculty for 1946-47" and "Faculty Data," in "608: Salary Scale, Comparative Study of Faculty Salaries in Church Colleges," E. G. Kaufman (MLA.III.1.A.1.g), MCUSA Archives-North Newton.

13 These figures are calculated from the Administrative Staff Salary Schedules and Faculty Salary Schedules found in "122: Faculty Salary Schedule," Orville Voth (MLA.III.1.A.1.j), MCUSA Archives-North Newton.

14 1940s figures are calculated from "Study of Faculty for 1946-47" and "Faculty Data," in "608: Salary Scale, Comparative Study of Faculty Salaries in Church Colleges," E. G. Kaufman (MLA.III.1.A.1.g), MCUSA Archives-North Newton. Later figures are calculated from Administrative Staff Salary Schedules and Faculty Salary Schedules found in "122: Faculty Salary Schedule," Orville Voth (MLA.III.1.A.1.j), MCUSA Archives-North Newton.

15 Colleges included in the study were Baker University (Baldwin, KS), Bethany College (Lindsborg, KS), College of Emporia (KS), Friends University (Wichita, KS), Kansas Wesleyan University (Salina, KS), McPherson (KS) College and Southwestern College (Winfield, KS). "Comparative Study of Faculty Salaries in Church Colleges, 1945-46," in "608: Salary Scale, Comparative Study of Faculty Salaries in Church Colleges," E. G. Kaufman (MLA.III.1.A.1.g), MCUSA Archives-North Newton.

16 "Church Educational Institutions Salary Study," in "176: Faculty Salary Studies," E. G. Kaufman (MLA.III.1.A.1.g), MCUSA Archives-North Newton.

17 "Annual Salaries of Academic Staffs in 233 Colleges and Universities, 1947-48" and "Monthly Wages of Operating Staffs in 207 Colleges and Universities, 1947-48" reports prepared by the Central Association of College and University Business Officers, in "608: Salary Scale, Comparative Study of Faculty Salaries in Church Colleges," E. G. Kaufman (MLA.III.1.A.1.g), MCUSA Archives-North Newton.

18 Kreider, "A Philosophy of Staff Remuneration," 1.

19 "Memorandum on General Policy of Faculty Rank, Tenure, Salary," 1950, in "Contracts," personal files of Mary K. Nafziger, Goshen, IN (hereafter MKN).

20 "Section I: Proposed Salary Schedule for Bethel College," in "176: Faculty Salary Studies," E. G. Kaufman (MLA.III.1.A.1.g), MCUSA Archives-North Newton.

21 Harold Gross, dean, and Ronald von Riesen, president, Freeman Junior College, "Suggested Faculty Salary Schedule," 1952, in "176: Faculty Salary Studies," E. G. Kaufman (MLA.III.1.A.1.g), MCUSA Archives-North Newton.

22 Hubert R. Pellman, *Eastern Mennonite College, 1917–1967: A History* (Harrisonburg, VA: Eastern Mennonite College, 1967), 141; Nelson Kilmer, interview by author, Sept. 29, 2010; George Lehman, interview by author, Oct. 18, 2010; James Mininger, interview by author, Oct. 29, 2010; and Laban Peachey, interview by author, Nov. 2, 2010.

23 A small study conducted in the mid-1950s concluded that none of the selected non-Mennonite colleges (McPherson, Friends and Manchester College, North Manchester, IN) had dependency allowances. However, William Penn College, a Quaker school in Oskaloosa, IA, did have a salary structure similar to the Mennonite schools, including dependency allowances. See "Section I: Proposed Salary Schedule for Bethel College"; and D. C. Wedel memo to E. G. Kaufman, Oct. 13, 1949. Both documents are in "176: Faculty Salary Studies," E. G. Kaufman (MLA.III.1.A.1.g), MCUSA Archives-North Newton.

24 See "Church Educational Institutions Salary Study," in "176: Faculty Salary Studies," E. G. Kaufman (MLA.III.1.A.1.g), MCUSA Archives-North Newton. In 1950, Goshen College offered a 75 percent discount, while Bethel College offered 50 percent. "Memorandum on General Policy of Faculty Rank, Tenure, Salary," 1950, in "Contracts," MKN; "Section I: Proposed Salary Schedule for Bethel College," in "176: Faculty Salary Studies," E. G. Kaufman (MLA.III.1.A.1.g), MCUSA Archives-North Newton.

25 All of the colleges in the mid-1950s study (including non-Mennonite colleges McPherson, Friends and Manchester) offered tuition discounts to children of employees. "Section I: Proposed Salary Schedule for Bethel College," in "176: Faculty Salary Studies," E. G. Kaufman (MLA.III.1.A.1.g), MCUSA Archives-North Newton, KS.

26 "All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need." *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1989), Acts 2:44-45.

27 "Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need." Ibid.

28 Olive G. Wyse, "Senior Statement: We Have Come a Long Way (1924-76)," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 52, no. 2 (1978): 167–68.

29 "Memorandum on General Policy of Faculty Rank, Tenure, Salary," 1950, in "Contracts," MKN.

30 It is interesting to note that these reasons are not only based on assumptions of greater financial need but also rely on assumptions about the greater productivity, dependability and stability of married men. Gross and von Riesen, "Suggested Faculty Salary Schedule," 1952, in "176: Faculty Salary Studies," E. G. Kaufman (MLA.III.1.A.1.g), MCUSA Archives-North Newton.

31 See "Contracts," MKN.

32 The phrase *"die Stille im Lande"* ("the quiet in the land") is often used to describe the traditionally reclusive Mennonite style of living. For more on the development of Mennonite forms of separation and engagement in the twentieth century, see Paul Toews, *Mennonites in American Society, 1930–1970: Modernity and the Persistence of Religious Community,* vol. 4, The Mennonite Experience in America (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1996), 184–213. For an analysis of the impact of modernization on Mennonites and the increasing emphasis on peace and justice, see Leo Driedger and Donald B. Kraybill, *Mennonite Peacemaking: From Quietism to Activism* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1994).

33 For more on the increasing importance of "justice" in Mennonite thought, see Driedger and Kraybill, *Mennonite Peacemaking,* 150–54.

34 This was conveyed especially by Marion Deckert, interview by author, Sept. 21, 2010; John K. Sheriff, interview by author, Nov. 8, 2010; and Willard Swartley, interview by author, Oct. 7, 2010. Suggested salaries for pastors were often based upon the average salaries of public school teachers, which, through the mid-1980s, were consistently slightly lower than average faculty salaries at most of the Mennonite schools (with the exception of Hesston College). In the late-1980s, public teacher salaries rose significantly, and pastors' salaries often did not keep up.

35 Many current and former Goshen faculty and administrators spoke graciously of these benefits: Kathryn Aschliman, interview by author, Oct. 27, 2010; Nafziger, interview; John Nyce, interview by author, Sept. 23, 2010; Mary Oyer, interview by author, Oct. 4, 2010; Shirley H. Showalter, interview by author, Sept. 17, 2010; Victor S. Stoltzfus, interview by author, Sept. 21, 2010; William Zuercher, e-mail to the author, Oct. 19, 2010.

36 Myron Augsburger, interview by author, Oct. 6, 2010; Beryl H. Brubaker, interview by author, Oct. 4, 2010; Virgil Claassen, interview by author, Oct. 7, 2010; Melvin M. Goering, interview by author, Nov. 6, 2010; Sheriff, interview; Loren Swartzendruber, interview by author, Oct. 5, 2010.

37 A. J. Metzler, "The Problem of Job Evaluation and Remuneration Scales for All Church-Employing Agencies," report from 1959 Conference on Church Personnel, 1966, 4, in "Salary Policy Advisory Committee, 1978-80," Mennonite Church General Board, 1971–2002: Files, 1978-80 (Data Set #3) (I-6-5, Box 3, File 15), MCUSA Archives-Goshen.

38 See "Suggestions from Various Schools," which stated, "Salaries up to $300 a year above the basic schedule may be paid in given instances to meet the law of supply and demand in employing teachers." In "176: Faculty Salary Studies," E. G. Kaufman (MLA.III.1.A.1.g), MCUSA Archives-North Newton.

39 Paul L. Wenger, "A Biblical Study of Labor and Management," 1951, 4, in "Wenger, Paul L. 'A Biblical Study of Labor and Management'," Mennonite Church Committee on Economic and Social Relations, 1939–1973 (I-3-7, Box 3, File 37), MCUSA Archives-Goshen.

40 M. R. Good, "Christian Ethics in Business Administration," 1951, 4–5, in "Good, M.R. 'Christian Ethics in Business Administration'," Mennonite Church Committee on Economic and Social Relations, 1939–1973 (I-3-7, Box 3, File 28), MCUSA Archives-Goshen.

41 "Suggested Formula for Categories and Salaries of Conference Office Employees," 1957, in "149: GC–Position Categories & Salary Schedule," D. C. Wedel (MLA.III.1.A.1.h), MCUSA Archives-North Newton.

42 "Christian Principles to Guide the Church in the Remuneration of Church Workers," 1961, 1, in "General Council Minutes, Apr 1959–Sept 1960," Mennonite Church General Council Records, 1949–70 (I-2-5, Box 2, File 2), MCUSA Archives-Goshen.

43 Ibid.

44 "Committee on Coordination of Church Program," Minutes, Dec. 4, 1959, 2, in "General Council Minutes, Apr 1959–Sept 1960," Mennonite Church General Council Records, 1949–70 (I-2-5, Box 2, File 2), MCUSA Archives-Goshen.

45 Wedel, *The Story of Bethel College*, 361.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid., 457.

48 This trend was acknowledged in several interviews: Karl Brubaker, interview by author, Oct. 27, 2010; Del Good, interview by author, Nov. 8, 2010; Goering, interview; Fred Kniss, interview by author, Oct. 8, 2010; Victor Koop, interview by author, Nov. 1, 2010; J. Nelson Kraybill, interview by author, Sept. 28, 2010; Mininger, interview; Snyder, interview; Swartzendruber, interview.

49 This general trend of increasing engagement is outlined in Toews, *Mennonites in American Society*.

50 Again, this trend was acknowledged in several interviews: Ray Friesen, interview by author, Oct. 13, 2010; Goering, interview; James L. Histand, interview by author, Sept. 27, 2010; Nyce, interview; Showalter, interview.

51 Augsburger, interview; Goering, interview; Paul Harder, interview by author, Nov. 5, 2010; Nyce, interview; Peachey, interview; John Stahl, interview by author, Oct. 26, 2010.

52 The increase in external comparisons is important, but of even greater significance is to whom the schools were choosing to compare themselves. A seemingly small change in the choice of comparison group can have an incredible impact upon how an institution judges itself, and how its employees perceive their economic treatment. As the Mennonite schools increasingly saw themselves as premier institutions of academic excellence, comparison groups shifted to reflect that development. Increasing use of "upward comparisons" can almost unintentionally foster a growing sense of unfairness and inequity, while comparisons with smaller schools might be received much more favorably.

Mennonite Historical Bulletin

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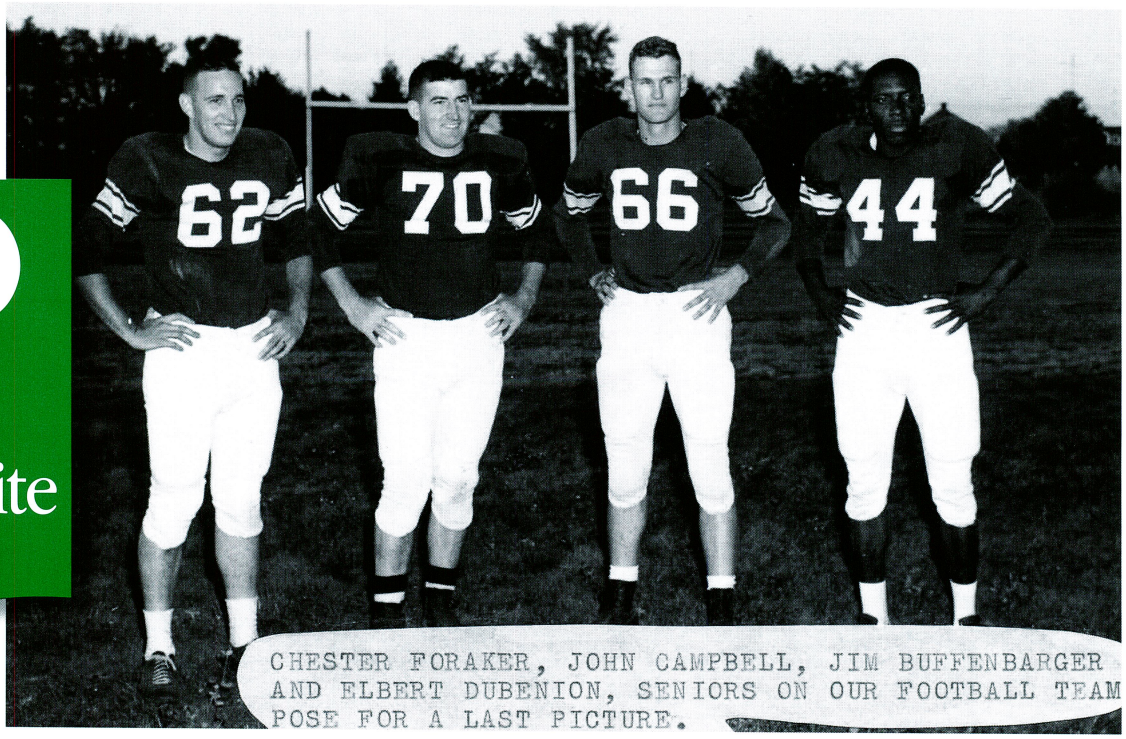

CHESTER FORAKER, JOHN CAMPBELL, JIM BUFFENBARGER AND ELBERT DUBENION, SENIORS ON OUR FOOTBALL TEAM POSE FOR A LAST PICTURE.

Bluffton University

Elbert Dubenion (right) followed an Army buddy to Bluffton (Ohio) University and became the most acclaimed athlete to ever play for a Mennonite college. He was a halfback for the Beavers from 1955 to 1958, setting numerous records and earning All-America honors. Dubenion then went on to an outstanding professional career as a receiver, running back and kick returner for the Buffalo Bills of the American Football League. A three-time all-league selection, he is fourth in Buffalo team history in receiving yardage and touchdowns and seventh in AFL history in yardage and receptions.

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